

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1899.

SAVROLA.

(A MILITARY AND POLITICAL ROMANCE.)

BY WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE the swift succession of great events in the Lauranian capital had occupied with immediate emergency the minds of the men, it had been different with the women. Out in the streets there had been vivid scenes, hot blood, and excitement. The dangers of war, and the occasion of close and involved fighting, had given many opportunities for acts of devotion and brutality. The brave man had displayed his courage; the cruel had indulged his savagery; all the intermediate types had been thrilled with the business of the moment, and there had scarce been time for any but involuntary terror. Within the houses it was different.

Lucile started up at the first sound of firing. There was not much to hear, a distant and confused popping with an occasional ragged crash; but she knew what all this meant and shuddered. The street below seemed from the noise to be full of people. She rose and going to the window looked down. By the sickly, uncertain light of the gas-lamps men were working busily at a barricade, which ran across the street about twenty yards from the door and on the side towards the palace. She watched the bustling figures with a strange interest

which distracted her thoughts, feeling that if she had nothing to look at she would go mad with the dreadful suspense. Not a detail escaped her.

How hard they worked! Men with crowbars and pickaxes were prizing up the paving-stones; others carried them along, staggering under their weight; others again piled them into a strong wall across the road. The people in the houses round were made to open their doors, and the rebels unceremoniously dragged out all sorts of things to put on their barricade. One party discovered several barrels which they appeared to consider a valuable prize. Knocking in the end of one cask they began filling it, spade-ful by spade-ful, with the earth which the removal of the pavement had laid bare. It was a long business, but at last they finished it and tried to lift the barrel on to the wall; it was too heavy, and falling with a crash to the ground it broke all in pieces. At this they were furious and disputed angrily, till an officer with a red sash came up and silenced them. They did not attempt to fill the other casks, but re-entering the house brought out a comfortable sofa and sat down on it sullenly, lighting their pipes. One by one, however, they got to work again, coming out of their sulky fit

by degrees, and careful of their dignity. And all this time the barricade grew steadily.

Lucile wondered why no one had entered Savrola's house. Presently she perceived the reason; there was a picket of four men with rifles on the doorstep: nothing had been forgotten by that comprehensive mind. So the hours passed. From time to time her thoughts reverted to the tragedy which had swept upon her life, and she would sink back upon the sofa in despair. Once, from sheer weariness, she dozed for an hour. The distant firing had died away and, though single shots were occasionally heard, the city was generally silent. Waking with a strange feeling of uneasy trouble she ran again to the window. The barricade was completed now, and the builders were lying down behind it. Their weapons leaned against the wall on which two or three watchers stood, looking constantly up the street.

Presently there was a hammering at the street-door, which made her heart beat with fear. She leaned cautiously out of the window. The picket was still at its post, but another man had joined them. Finding that he could not obtain an answer to his knocking, he stooped down, pushed something under the door, and went his way. After a time she summoned up courage to creep down, through the darkness of the staircase, to see what this might be. By the light of a match she saw that it was a note addressed simply *Lucile* with the number of the house and street,—for the streets were all numbered in Laurania as in American cities. It was from Savrola, in pencil and to this effect: *The city and forts have passed into our hands, but there will be fighting at daylight. On no account leave the house or expose yourself.*

Fighting at daylight! She looked at the clock,—a quarter to five, and already the sky was growing brighter; the time was at hand then! Fear, grief, anxiety, and, not the least painful, resentment at her husband conflicted in her mind. The sleeping figures behind the barricade seemed to be troubled by none of these feelings: they lay silent and still, weary men who had no cares; but she knew it was coming, something loud and terrible that would wake them with a start. She felt as though she was watching a play at the theatre, the window suggesting a box. She had turned from it for a moment, when suddenly a rifle-shot rang out, apparently about three hundred yards down the street towards the palace. Then there was a splutter of firing, a bugle-call, and the sound of shouting. The defenders of the barricade sprang up in mad haste and seized their weapons. There was more firing, but still they did not reply, and she dared not put her head out of the window to see what prevented them. They were all greatly excited, holding their rifles over the barricade, and many talking in quick short sentences. In a moment a crowd of men, nearly a hundred it seemed, ran up to the wall and began scrambling over, helped by the others. They were friends, then; it occurred to her that there must be another barricade, and that the one under the window was in the second line. This was actually the case, and the first had been captured. All the time firing from the direction of the palace continued.

As soon as the fugitives were all across the wall, the defenders of the second line began to fire. The rifles close by sounded so much louder than the others, and gave forth such bright flashes. But the light was

growing every minute, and soon she could see the darting puffs of smoke. The rebels were armed with many kinds of firearms. Some, with old muzzle-loading muskets, had to stand up and descend from the barricade to use their ramrods; others, armed with more modern weapons, remained crouching behind their cover and fired continually.

The scene, filled with little forest-shortened figures, still suggested the stage of a theatre viewed from the gallery. She did not as yet feel frightened; no harm had been done, and no one seemed to be any the worse.

She had scarcely completed this thought when she noticed a figure being lifted off the barricade to the ground. In the growing daylight the pale face showed distinctly, and a deadly feeling of sickness came over her in a moment; but she stood spell-bound by the sight. Four men went off with the wounded one, carrying him by the shoulders and feet, so that he drooped in the middle. When they had passed out of her view, she looked back to the wall. There were five more men wounded; four had to be carried, the other leaned on a comrade's arm. Two more figures had also been pulled off the barricade, and laid carelessly on the pavement out of the way. Nobody seemed to take any notice of these, but just let them lie close to the area-railings.

Then from the far end of the street came the sound of drums and the shrill call of a bugle, repeated again and again. The rebels began to shoot in mad excitement as fast as they could; several fell, and above the noise of the firing rose a strange sound, a sort of hoarse, screaming whoop, coming momentarily nearer.

A man on the barricade jumped

off and began to run down the street; five, six others followed at once; then all the defenders but three hurried away from that strange approaching cry. Several tried to drag with them the wounded, of which there already were a few more; these cried out in pain and begged to be left alone. One man, she saw, dragging another by the ankle, bumping him along the rough road-way in spite of his entreaties. The three men who had stayed fired methodically from behind their breastwork. All this took several seconds; and the menacing shout came nearer and louder all the time.

Then in an instant a wave of men, soldiers in blue uniforms faced with buff, surged up to the barricade and over it. An officer, quite a boy, in front of them all, jumped down the other side, shouting, "Make a clear sweep of the devils,—come on!"

The three steadfast men had disappeared as rocks beneath the incoming tide. Crowds of soldiers climbed over the barricade; Lucile could see groups of them swarming round each of the wounded rebels, jobbing downwards with their bayonets savagely. And then the spell broke, the picture swam, and she rushed screaming from the window to plunge her face among the sofa-cushions.

The uproar was now terrific. The musketry-fire was loud and continuous, especially from the direction of the main avenue which ran parallel to the street in which Savrola lived, and the shouting and trampling of men added to the din. Gradually the wave of fighting rolled past the house and on towards the Mayoralty. As she realised this, all her own troubles returned to her mind. The fight was going against the rebels; she thought of Savrola. And then she prayed,—prayed convulsively, sending

her entreaties into space in the hope that they would not fall on unheeding ears. She spoke no name; but the gods, who are omniscient, may have guessed, with sardonic smiles, that she prayed for the victory of the rebel she loved over her husband the President.

Presently there was a tremendous noise from the direction of the Mayoralty. "Cannon," she thought, but she dared not look out of the window; the horrid sights had sickened curiosity itself. She could hear the fire coming nearer, coming back again; and at that she felt a strange joy, something of the joy of success in war, amid all her terrors. There was a noise of people streaming past the house; shots were fired under the windows; then came a great hammering and battering at the street-door. They were breaking into the house! She rushed to the door of the room and locked it. Down-stairs there were several shots, and the noise of splintering wood. The firing of the retreating troops drifted back past the house and towards the palace; but she did not heed it; another sound paralysed her attention, the sound of approaching footsteps. Someone was coming up-stairs. She held her breath. The handle turned, and then the unknown, finding the door locked, kicked it savagely. Lucile screamed.

The kicking ceased, and she heard the stranger give a dreadful groan. "For the mercy of Heaven, let me in! I am wounded and have no arms." He began to wail pitifully.

Lucile listened. It seemed that there was but one, and if he were wounded, he would not harm her. There was another groan outside. Human sympathy rose in her heart; she unlocked the door and opened it cautiously.

A man walked quickly into the

room; it was Miguel. "I beg your Excellency's pardon," he said suavely, with that composure which always strengthened his mean soul; "I am in need of a hiding-place."

"But your wound?" said Lucile.

"A *ruse-de-guerre*; I wanted you to let me in. Where can I hide? They may be here soon."

"There on the roof, or in the observatory," she said pointing to the other door.

"Do not tell them."

"Why should I?" she replied. Calm though the man undoubtedly was, she despised him; there was no dirt, she knew well, that he would not eat if it suited his purpose to do so.

He went up and concealed himself on the roof under the big telescope. Meanwhile she waited. Emotions had succeeded each other so rapidly that day in her heart that she felt incapable of further stress; a dull feeling of pain remained, like the numbness and sense of injury after a severe wound. The firing receded towards the palace, and presently all was comparatively silent in the city again.

At about nine o'clock the bell of the front-entrance rang; but she did not dare to leave the room now that the door was broken down. Then after a while came the sound of people coming up-stairs.

"There is no lady here; the young lady went back the night before last to her aunt's," said a voice. It was the old woman's; with a bound of joy and a passionate craving for the sympathy of her own sex, Lucile rushed to the door and opened it. Bettine was there, and with her an officer of the rebel army, who handed a letter to her with these words: "The President sends this to you, Madam."

"The President!"

"Of the Council of Public Safety."



The note merely informed her that the Government troops had been repulsed and ended with the words: *Only one result is now possible, and that will be attained in a few hours.*

The officer, saying that he would wait down-stairs in case she might wish to send an answer, left the room. Lucile pulled the old nurse inside the door and embraced her, weeping. Where had she been all that terrible night? Bettine had been in the cellar. It seemed that Savrola had thought of her as of everything; he had told her to take her bed down there, and had even had the place carpeted and furnished on the preceding afternoon. There she had remained as he had told her. Her perfect trust in her idol had banished all fears on her own account, but she had "fidgetted terribly" about him. He was all she had in the world; others dissipate their affections on a husband, children, brothers, and sisters; all the love of her kind old heart was centred in the man she had fostered since he was a helpless baby. And he did not forget. She displayed with pride a slip of paper, bearing the words, *Safe and well.*

There was now a subdued sound of firing, from the direction of the palace, which continued throughout the morning; but Miguel, seeing that the streets were again quiet, emerged from his concealment and re-entered the room. "I want to see the President," he said.

"My husband?" asked Lucile.

"No, your Excellency, Señor Savrola." Miguel was quick in adapting himself to circumstances.

Lucile thought of the officer; she mentioned him to Miguel. "He will take you to the Mayoralty."

The Secretary was delighted; he ran down-stairs and they saw him no more.

The old nurse, a practical soul,

busied herself about getting breakfast. Lucile, to divert her thoughts aided her, and soon, — such is our composition—found comfort in eggs and bacon. They were relieved to find that a picket had again been posted at the street-door. Bettine discovered this, for Lucile, her mood unchanged, would not look into the street where she had seen such grim spectacles. And she did right, for though the barricade was now deserted, nearly twenty objects that had a few hours before been men lay around or upon it. But about eleven some labourers arrived with two scavengers' carts; and soon only the blood-stains on the pavement showed that there had been any destruction other than that of property.

The morning wore slowly and anxiously away. The firing near the palace was continual, but distant. Sometimes it swelled into a dull roar, at others the individual shots sounded in a sort of quick rattle. At last, at about half-past two, it stopped abruptly. Lucile trembled. The quarrel had been decided, one way or the other. Her mind refused to face all the possibilities. At times she clung in passionate fear to the old nurse, who tried in vain to soothe her; at others she joined her in the household tasks, or submitted to tasting the various meals which the poor old soul prepared for her in the hopes of killing care with comfort.

The ominous silence that followed the cessation of the firing did not last long. It was while Lucile was being coaxed by Bettine to eat some custard-pudding that she had made on purpose for her, that the report of the first great gun reached them. The tremendous explosion, though a long way off, made the windows rattle. She shuddered. What was this? She had hoped that all was over; but one explosion succeeded

another, until the thunder of a canonade from the harbour almost drowned their voices. It was a weary waiting for the two women.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

LIEUTENANT TIRO reached the Mayoralty in safety, for though the streets were full of excited people, they were peaceful citizens, and on his proclaiming that he had been sent to see Savrola they allowed him to pass. The municipal building was a magnificent structure of white stone, elaborately decorated with statuary and sculpture. In front of it, surrounded by iron railings and accessible by three gateways, stretched a wide courtyard in which a great fountain, encircled by the marble figures of departed civic magnates, played continually with agreeable effect. The whole edifice was worthy of the riches and splendour of the Lauranian capital.

Two sentries of the rebel forces stood on guard with fixed bayonets at the central gateway, and allowed none to enter without due authority. Messengers were hurrying across the courtyard incessantly, and orderlies coming or going at a gallop. Without the gates a large crowd, for the most part quiet though greatly agitated, filled the broad thoroughfare. Wild rumours circulated at random in the mass and the excitement was intense, while the sound of distant firing was distinct and continuous.

Tiro made his way through the crowd without much difficulty, but found his path blocked by the sentries at the gateway. They refused to allow him to proceed, and for a moment he feared that he had run his risks in vain. Luckily, however, he was recognised as Molara's aide-de-camp by one of the municipal attendants who were loitering in the

courtyard. He wrote his name on a piece of paper and requested the man to take it to Savrola or, as he was now styled, the President of the Council of Public Safety. The servant departed, and after ten minutes returned with an officer, resplendent with the red sash of the Revolutionary party, who bade the Subaltern follow him forthwith.

The hall of the Mayoralty was full of excited and voluble patriots, who were eager to serve the cause of liberty if it could be done without risking their lives. They all wore red sashes and talked loudly, discussing the despatches from the fight which arrived by frequent messengers and were posted on the walls. Tiro and his guide passed through the hall and hurrying along a passage arrived at the entrance of a small committee-room. Several ushers and messengers stood around it, and an officer was on duty outside, who opened the door and announced the Subaltern.

"Certainly," said a well-known voice and Tiro entered. It was a small, wainscotted apartment with two tall and deeply-set glazed windows shaded by heavy, faded curtains of reddish hue. Savrola was writing at a table in the middle of the room; Godoy and Renos were talking near one of the windows; another man, whom for the moment he did not recognise, was busily scribbling in the corner. The great Democrat looked up.

"Good-morning, Tiro," he said cheerily, then, seeing the serious and impatient look on the boy's face, he asked him what had happened. Tiro told him quickly of the President's wish to surrender the palace. "Well," said Savrola, "Moret is there, and he has full powers."

"He is dead."

"How?" asked Savrola, in a low pained voice.

"Shot in the throat," replied the Subaltern laconically.

Savrola had turned very white; his friendship with Moret was of old standing, and he was fond of the young fellow. A feeling of disgust at the whole struggle came over him, but this was no time for regrets, and he repressed it. "You mean that the crowd will accept no surrender?"

"I mean they have probably massacred them all by now."

"What time was Moret killed?"

"A quarter-past twelve."

Savrola took up a paper that lay beside him on the table. "This was sent off at half-past twelve."

Tiro looked at it. It was signed *Moret* and ran as follows: *Am preparing for final assault. All well.*

"It is a forgery," said the Subaltern simply. "I started myself before the half-hour, and Señor Moret had been dead ten minutes then. Somebody has assumed the command."

"By Jove," said Savrola getting up from the table. "Kreutze!" He caught up his hat and cane. "Come on; he will most certainly murder Molara, and probably the others, if he is not stopped. I must go there myself."

"What?" said Renos. "This is most irregular; your place is here."

"Send an officer," suggested Godoy.

"I have none to send of sufficient power with the people, unless you will go yourself."

"I! No, certainly not! I would not think of it," said Godoy quickly. "It would be useless; I have no authority over the mob."

"That is not quite the tone you have adopted all the morning," quietly replied Savrola, "or at least since the Government attack was repulsed." Then turning to Tiro, he said, "Let us start."

They were leaving the room when the Subaltern saw that the man

who had been writing in the corner was looking at him. To his astonishment he recognised Miguel. The Secretary bowed satirically. "Here we are again," he said; "you were wise to follow."

"You insult me," said Tiro with profound contempt. "Rats leave a sinking ship."

"The wiser they," rejoined the Secretary; "they could do no good by staying. I have always heard that aides-de-camp are the first to leave a fight."

"You are a damned dirty dog," said the Subaltern falling back on a rudimentary form of repartee with which he was more familiar.

"I can wait no longer," said Savrola in a voice that was a plain command. Tiro obeyed, and they left the room.

Walking down the passage and through the hall, where Savrola was loudly cheered, they reached the entrance, where a carriage was waiting. A dozen mounted men, with red sashes and rifles, ranged themselves about it as an escort. The crowd outside the gates, seeing the great leader and hearing the applause within, raised a shout. Savrola turned to the commander of the escort. "I need no guard," he said; "that is necessary only for tyrants. I will go alone." The escort fell back. The two men entered the carriage which, drawn by a pair of strong horses, passed out into the streets.

"You dislike Miguel?" asked Savrola after a while.

"He is a traitor."

"There are plenty about the city. Now I suppose you would call me a traitor."

"Ah, but you have always been one," replied Tiro bluntly. Savrola gave a short laugh. "I mean," continued the other, "that you have always been trying to upset things."

"I have been loyal to my treachery," suggested Savrola.

"Yes,—we have always been at war with you; but this viper——"

"Well," said Savrola, "you must take men as you find them; few are disinterested. The viper, as you call him, is a poor creature; but he saved my life, and asked me to save his in return. What could I do? Besides he is of use. He knows the exact state of the public finances and is acquainted with the details of the foreign policy. What are we stopping for?"

Tiro looked out. The street was closed by a barricade which made it a *cul-de-sac*. "Try the next turning," he said to the coachman; "go on quickly." The noise of the firing could now be distinctly heard. "We very nearly did it this morning," said Tiro.

"Yes," answered Savrola; "they told me the attack was repulsed with difficulty."

"Where were you?" asked the boy in great astonishment.

"At the Mayoralty, asleep; I was very tired."

Tiro was conscious of an irresistible feeling of disgust. So he was a coward, this great man. He had always heard that politicians took care of their skins, and sent others to fight their battles. Somehow he had thought that Savrola was different: he knew such a lot about polo; but he was the same as all the rest.

Savrola, ever quick to notice, saw his look and again laughed drily. "You think I ought to have been in the streets? Believe me, I did more good where I was. If you had seen the panic and terror at the Mayoralty during the fighting, you would have recognised that there were worse things to do than to go to sleep in confidence. Besides, every-

thing in human power had been done; and we had not miscalculated."

Tiro remained unconvinced. His good opinion of Savrola was destroyed. He had heard much of this man's political courage, and the physical always outweighed the moral in his mind. He felt reluctantly convinced that he was a mere word-spinner, brave enough where speeches were concerned, but careful when sterner work was to be done.

The carriage stopped again. "All these streets are barricaded, Sir," said the coachman.

Savrola looked out of the window. "We are close there, let us walk; it is only half a mile across Constitution Square." He jumped out. The barricade was deserted, as were the streets in this part of the town. Most of the violent rebels were attacking the palace, while the peaceable citizens were in their houses or outside the Mayoralty.

They scrambled over the rough wall, which was made of paving stones and sacks of earth piled under and upon two waggons, and hurried down the street beyond. It led to the great square of the city. At the further end was the Parliament House, with the red flag of revolt flying from its tower. An entrenchment had been dug in front of the entrance, and the figures of some of the rebel soldiery were visible on it.

They had gone about a quarter of the distance across the square, when suddenly, from the entrenchment or barricade three hundred yards away, there darted a puff of smoke; five or six more followed in quick succession. Savrola paused, astonished, but the Subaltern understood at once. "Run for it!" he cried. "The statue,—there is cover behind it."

Savrola began to run as fast as he could. The firing from the barricade continued. He heard something sing-

ing past him in the air; something else struck the pavement in front of him so that the splinters flew, and while he passed a grey smudge appeared; there was a loud *tang* on the area-railings beside him, and the dust of the roadway sprang up in several strange spurts. As he ran, the realisation of what these things meant grew stronger; but the distance was short and he reached the statue alive. Behind its massive pedestal there was ample shelter for both.

"They fired at us."

"They did," replied Tiro. "Damn 'em!"

"But why?"

"My uniform—devilry—running man—good fun you know—for them."

"We must go on," said Savrola.

"We can't go on across the square."

"Which way then?"

"We must work down the street away from them, keeping the statue between us and their fire, and get up one of the streets to the left."

A main street ran through the centre of the great square, and led out of it at right angles to the direction in which they were proceeding. It was possible to retire down this under cover of the statue, and to take a parallel street further along. This would enable them to avoid the fire from the entrenchment, or would at least reduce the dangerous space to a few yards. Savrola looked in the direction Tiro indicated. "Surely this is shorter," he said pointing across the square.

"Much shorter," answered the Subaltern; "in about three seconds it will take you to another world."

Savrola rose. "Come on," he said; "I do not allow such considerations to affect my judgment. The lives of men are at stake, and the time is short. Besides, this is an educational experience."

The blood was in his cheeks and his eye sparkled; all that was reckless in him, all his love of excitement, stirred in his veins. Tiro looked at him amazed. Brave as he was, he saw no pleasure in rushing to his death at the heels of a mad politician; but he allowed no man to show him the way. He said no more, but drew back to the far end of the pedestal, so as to gain pace, and then bounded into the open and ran as fast as he could run.

How he got across he never knew. One bullet cut the peak of his cap, another tore his trousers. He had seen many men killed in action, and anticipating the fearful blow that would bring him down with a smash on the pavement, instinctively he raised his left arm as if to shield his face. At length he reached safety, breathless and incredulous. Then he looked back. Half way across was Savrola, walking steadily and drawn up to his full height. Thirty yards away he stopped and, taking off his felt hat, waved it in defiance at the distant barricade. Tiro saw him start as he lifted his arm, and his hat fell to the ground. He did not pick it up and in a moment was beside him, his face pale, his teeth set, every muscle rigid. "Now tell me," he said, "do you call that a hot fire?"

"You are mad," replied the Subaltern.

"Why, may I ask?"

"What is the use of throwing away your life, of waiting to taunt them?"

"Ah," he answered, much excited, "I waved my hat in the face of Fate, not at those wretched irresponsible animals. Now to the palace; perhaps we are already too late."

They hurried on through the deserted streets with the sound of musketry growing ever louder, and mingling with it now the shouts and yells of a crowd. As they approached the

scene they passed through groups of people, peaceful citizens for the most part, anxiously looking towards the tumult. Several glanced fiercely at the soldier whose uniform made him conspicuous; but many took off their hats to Savrola. A long string of stretchers, each with a pale, shattered figure on it, passed by, filing slowly away from the fight. The press became thicker, and arms were now to be seen on all sides. Mutinous soldiers still in their uniforms, workmen in blouses, others in the dress of the National Militia, and all wearing the red sash of the revolt, filled the street. But Savrola's name had spread before him and the crowd divided, with cheers, to give him passage.

Suddenly the firing in front ceased, and for a space there was silence, followed by a ragged spluttering volley and a low roar from many throats.

"It's all over," said the Subaltern.

"Faster!" cried Savrola.

#### CHAPTER XX.

ABOUT a quarter of an hour after Lieutenant Tiro had escaped along the telegraph-wires, the attack on the palace was renewed with vigour. It seemed, moreover, that the rebels had found a new leader, for they displayed considerable combination in their tactics. The firing increased on all sides. Then, under cover of their musketry, the enemy debouched simultaneously from several streets and, rushing down the great avenue, delivered a general assault. The garrison fired steadily and with effect, but there were not enough bullets to stop the advancing crowds. Many fell, but the rest pressed on impetuously and found shelter under the wall of the courtyard. The defenders, realising they could no longer hold this outer

line of defence, fell back to the building itself, where they maintained themselves among the great pillars of the entrance, and for some time held the enemy's fire in check by shooting accurately at all those who put their heads over the wall or exposed themselves. Gradually, however, the rebels, by their great numbers, gained the supremacy in the fire-fight, and the defenders in their turn found it dangerous to show themselves to shoot.

The musketry of the attack grew heavier, while that of the defence dwindled. The assailants now occupied the whole of the outer wall, and at length completely silenced the fire of the surviving adherents of the Government. Twenty rifles were discharged at any head that was seen; yet they showed a prudent respect for these determined men, and gave no chances away. Under cover of their fire, and of the court-yard wall, they brought up the field-gun with which the gate had been broken in, and from a range of a hundred yards discharged it at the palace. The shell smashed through the masonry, and burst in the great hall. Another followed, passing almost completely through the building and exploding in the breakfast-room on the further side. The curtains, carpets, and chairs, caught fire and began to burn briskly; it was evident that the defence of the palace was drawing to a close.

Sorrento, who had long schooled himself to look upon all events of war from a purely professional standpoint, and who boasted that the military operation he preferred above all others was the organising of a rearguard from a defeated army, felt that nothing further could be done. He approached the President.

Molara stood in the great hall where he had lived and ruled for five years with a look of bitter despair



upon his face. The mosaic of the pavement was ripped and scored by the iron splinters of the shells; great fragments of the painted roof had fallen to the ground; the crimson curtains were smouldering; the broken glass of the windows lay on the floor, and heavy clouds of smoke were curling in from the further side of the palace. The President's figure and expression accorded well with the scene of ruin and destruction.

Sorrento saluted with much ceremony. He had only his military code to believe in, and he took hold of that. "Owing, Sir," he began officially, "to the rebels having brought a gun into action at close range, it is my duty to inform you that this place has now become untenable. It will be necessary to capture the gun by a charge, and expel the enemy from the courtyard."

The President knew what he meant; they should rush out and die fighting. The agony of the moment was intense, for the actual dread of death was increased by the sting of unsatisfied revenge; he groaned aloud.

Suddenly a loud shout arose from the crowd. They had seen the smoke of the fire and knew that the end was at hand. "Molara, Molara, come out! Dictator," they cried, "come out or burn!"

It often happens that, when men are convinced that they have to die, a desire to bear themselves well and to leave life's stage with dignity conquers all other sensations. Molara remembered that, after all, he had lived famous among men. He had been almost a king. All the eyes of the world would be turned to the scene about to be enacted; distant countries would know, distant ages would reflect. It was worth while dying bravely, since die he must.

He called his last defenders around him. There were but thirty left, and

of these some were wounded. "Gentlemen," he said, "you have been faithful to the end; I will demand no more sacrifices of you. My death may appease those wild beasts. I give you back your allegiance, and authorise you to surrender."

"Never!" said Sorrento.

"It is a military order, Sir," answered the President, and walked towards the door. He stepped through the shattered woodwork and out on the broad flight of steps. The courtyard was filled with the crowd. Molara advanced until he had descended half-way; then he paused. "Here I am," he said. The crowd stared. For a moment he stood there in the bright sunlight. His dark blue uniform-coat, on which the star of Laurania and many orders and decorations of foreign countries glittered, was open, showing his white shirt beneath it. He was bare-headed and drew himself up to his full height. For a while there was silence.

Then from all parts of the courtyard, from the wall that overlooked it and even from the windows of the opposite houses, a ragged fusilade broke out. The President's head jerked forward, his legs shot from under him and he fell limply to the ground. The body rolled down two or three steps and lay twitching feebly. A man in a dark suit of clothes, who apparently exercised authority over the crowd, advanced towards it. Presently there was a single shot.

At the same moment Savrola and his companion, stepping through the broken gateway, entered the courtyard. The mob gave passage readily, but in a sullen and guilty silence.

"Keep close to me," said Savrola to the Subaltern. He walked straight towards the steps which were not as yet invaded by the rebel soldiery.

The officers among the pillars had, with the cessation of the firing, begun to show themselves; someone waved a handkerchief.

"Gentlemen," cried Savrola in a loud voice, "I call upon you to surrender. Your lives shall be spared."

Sorrento stepped forward. "By the orders of His Excellency I surrender the palace and the Government troops who have defended it. I do so on a promise that their lives shall be safe."

"Certainly," said Savrola. "Where is the President?" Sorrento pointed to the other side of the steps. Savrola turned and walked towards the spot.

Antonio Molara, sometime President of the Republic of Laurania, lay on the three lowest steps of the entrance of his palace, head downwards; a few yards away in a ring stood the people he had ruled. A man in a black suit was reloading his revolver; it was Karl Kreutze, the Number One of the Secret Society. The President had bled profusely from several bullet-wounds in the body, but it was evident that the *coup de grâce* had been administered by a shot in the head, which had blown away the back and left side of the skull behind the ear.

Savrola stopped aghast. He looked at the crowd, and they shrank from his eye; gradually they shuffled back, leaving the sombre-clad man alone face to face with the great Democrat. A profound hush overspread the whole mass of men. "Who has committed this murder?" he asked in low hoarse tones, fixing his glance on the head of the Secret Society.

"It is not a murder," replied the man doggedly; "it is an execution."

"By whose authority?"

"In the name of society."

When Savrola had seen the body of his enemy, he was stricken with

horror, but at the same time a dreadful joy convulsed his heart; the barrier was now removed. He struggled to repress the feeling, and of the struggle anger was born. Kreutze's words infuriated him; a sense of maddening irritation shook his whole system. All this must fall on his name; what would Europe think, what would the world say? Remorse, shame, pity, and the wicked joy he tried to crush, all fused into reckless ungovernable passion. "Vile scum!" he cried, and stepping down he slashed the other across the face with his cane.

The man sprang at his throat on the sudden impulse of intense pain. But Lieutenant Tiro had drawn his sword; with a strong arm and a hearty good-will he met him with all the sweep of a downward cut, and rolled him on the ground.

The spring was released, and the fury of the populace broke out. A loud shout arose. Great as was Savrola's reputation among the Revolutionaries, these men had known other and inferior leaders more intimately. Karl Kreutze was a man of the people. His socialistic writings had been widely read; as the head of the Secret Society he had certain assured influences to support him, and he had conducted the latter part of the attack on the palace. Now he had been destroyed before their eyes by one of the hated officers. The crowd surged forward shouting in savage anger.

Savrola sprang backwards up the steps. "Citizens, listen to me!" he cried. "You have won a victory; do not disgrace it. Your valour and patriotism have triumphed; do not forget that it is for our ancient constitution that you have fought." He was interrupted by shouts and jeers. "What have I done?" he rejoined. "As much as any here. I too have

risked my life in the great cause. Is there a man here that has a wound? Let him stand forth, for we are comrades." And for the first time, with a proud gesture, he lifted his left arm. Tiro now saw the reason of the start he had given when running the gauntlet in Constitution Square. The sleeve of his coat was torn and soaked with blood, and the linen of his shirt showed crimson through it; his fingers were stiff and smeared all over.

The impression produced was tremendous. The mob, to whom the dramatic always appeals with peculiar force, were also swayed by that sympathy which all men feel for those injured in a common danger. A revulsion took place. A cheer, faint at first, but growing louder, rose; others outside the courtyard, ignorant of the reason, took it up. Savrola continued.

"Our State, freed from tyranny, must start fair and unsullied. Those who have usurped undue authority, not derived from the people, shall be punished, whether they be presidents or citizens. These military officers must come before the judges of the Republic and answer for their actions. A free trial is the right of all Lauranians. Comrades, much has been done, but we have not finished yet. We have exalted Liberty; it remains to preserve her. These

officers shall be lodged in prison; for you there is other work. The ships are coming back; it is not yet time to put away the rifles. Who is there will see the matter through,—to the end?"

A man, with a bloodstained bandage round his head, stepped forward. "We are comrades," he cried; "shake hands."

Savrola gripped him. He was one of the under-officers in the rebel army, a simple honest man whom Savrola had known slightly for several months. "I entrust a high duty to you. Conduct these officers and soldiers to the State prison; I will send full instructions by a mounted messenger. Where can you find an escort?" There was no lack of volunteers. "To the prison then, and remember that the faith of the Republic depends on their safety. Forward, Gentlemen," he added, turning to the surviving defenders of the palace; "your lives are safe, upon my honour."

"The honour of a conspirator," sneered Sorrento.

"As you like, Sir, but obey."

The party, Tiro alone remaining with Savrola, moved off, surrounded and followed by many of the crowd. While they did so a dull heavy boom came up from the sea-front; another and another followed in quick succession. The fleet had returned at last.

*(To be continued.)*

## LONDON REVISITED.

He who lives always within the walls of his native city esteems its qualities as little as he recognises its defects. He is apt to take for granted its rare merits as well as its superfluous follies, and he should prove a less judicious critic than the casual foreigner who, passing through a strange land on a hasty visit, is at a loss neither for new facts nor fresh theories. It is not merely that the home-keeping man misses a standard of comparison; familiarity has bred in him, not contempt but, unconsciousness. Habit, which dims the sun and pierces the shapeless fog with light, closes our eyes to beauty and to common-place alike, till a sunrise in Piccadilly seems no more wonderful to the Londoner than does an Alpine dawn to the guides of Zermatt. In brief, he who would understand London must accustom his sight to Paris; and who knows but that a Russian would find Madrid an excellent preface to a study of St. Petersburg? Now, I have wandered so long in France, that at last I feel myself imperfectly equipped for the criticism of London; and though it may seem an affectation for an Englishman to look at his own land with a half-strange eye, it is an affectation in semblance only. One impression momentarily effaces another, and absence, while it makes the heart more fond, has also made the vision sharper.

As the returned traveller emerges from the train, and wanders into the familiar streets, he is instantly possessed with an affectionate enthusiasm. The reflection that the old landmarks are still unremoved gives

him an odd and wholly irrational sense of proprietorship. "There is Buckingham Palace," says he to himself, "and the British Museum, and the Athenæum Club just where I left them;" and the fact that they have not betrayed his trust inclines the wanderer's heart so kindly towards them that he instantly thinks of them as his own. But the sense of proprietorship soon dwindles, till he finds himself looking at the houses with a calm amazement. They are the same, yet strangely altered, and the traveller asks himself in surprise whether it is his eye that is foreign or his native town. In truth it is neither; the eye no doubt is tempered by the long absence; it is knowing, but less partial; it detects the ancient beauties with the same delight as heretofore, but it must also reckon in its own despite with the new vulgarities. The city, though it be not foreign, is yet transformed, and not even the honoured landmarks can render it wholly familiar. Wherefore the traveller walks forth an enchanted mixture of marvel and intimacy, and he is flattered, no doubt, by the reflection that he has as good a right to discourse of London as the intelligent tourist who lands at Dover for the first time.

The first impression is an impression of silence. This seeming paradox has more than once been noted by Parisians, and with perfect justice. London, the busy workshop of the world, is silent. No cobbles persuade the cart-wheels to a restless rattle; the tyres of the cabs roll tranquilly over wood or asphalte; the

foot-passengers hustle by in business-like quietude, or they greet one another without gesture and without effusion. In Paris all is movement, bustle, and joyousness; nobody is in a hurry, yet everybody flashes his hands and his tongue at the same rate. The one city is silent with haste, the other is noisy with a non-chalant leisure. And then the horses of London! Are they not masterful and superb? Are they not driven with a certainty and calm, which make the hazardous blundering of the French coachman a hideous memory? The hansom, moreover, has more character than any chariot of the world: its rare apparition on the Boulevards gives you a touch of homesickness; but in London it belongs to the landscape, and harmonises perfectly not only with the tall hat, but with the height of the houses under whose shadow it passes. There they rush, the fleet-wheeled hansoms of Piccadilly, as though they were parts of an elegant monumental frieze. And thus London reveals her true grandeur. Hardly in Madrid, whose streets are valiant with the sturdy horses of Cordova or with careless, be-tasselled mules, will you match the miracle that draws our hansoms. The spavined cab-horse, familiar to Paris, is with us seen only in the intermittent four-wheeler. Why is it, by the way, that four wheels should so often have a disastrous effect on the horse that runs in front?<sup>1</sup>

But if the horses come as a happy surprise, the streets themselves have strangely altered, and even the Strand has changed its old complexion. The

unaccustomed eye is conscious of a new glitter, and divines not whence it comes. At night the problem is easily solved. The hideous sky-signs, which applaud in changing colours the merits of some intolerable drug, or implore you to buy some sustaining compound for your stomach's sake, might transform the face of a prairie. They wink, they shift, they scintillate, they go out. Now yellow plays on red; now darkness pockets all the colours; and the passer-by is not only distressed by these sudden apparitions, he is even prompted to the cultivation of a new vice. As his cab rushes by the illuminated spot, he will hazard all the money in one pocket against all the money in another that the red light will not flash again until he is swept off out of sight. But while this kaleidoscope of advertisement makes night hideous, it does not pervert the visage of the day. Why is it, then, that at noon the shops have a curious aspect? Why do they shine with a flat and tiresome brilliance? The reason is simple; the plate-glass window of America has everywhere ousted the trim square and modest sash. Years ago, when the casement was still with us, we did not realise how admirable and sober a pattern it was that the draught-board of window-panes put upon our shops. Here and there the old fashion lingers, and the contrast may yet be measured; but most of our shops are so wofully disturbed by a set of cross-reflections that the worried eye can hardly look through the superficial glitter to the wares displayed within.

Moreover the posters of London are a constant shock to the returned cockney. That the streets should be regarded as something better than a thoroughfare is right and proper; all the world is not in a desperate hurry to go from one spot to another

<sup>1</sup> There have been more changes in London during Mr. Whibley's absence than he wots of. The best of our four-wheeled cabs are every whit as well-horsed and well-driven as our best hansoms and infinitely more comfortable to horse, driver, and passenger. The mischief is that there are so few of them.—EDITOR.

by the shortest route. The idler may be happy in threading the by-ways, or in gazing upon the pictures which decorate the wider avenues. There is no reason, in brief, why a street should not in one of its aspects appear a gallery of art. But in London the mural decorator is more anxious to inform than to amuse. His legend will tell you where you may admire the talent of an actor or purchase a patent medicine, and his legend is so aggressively important that it cannot be subdued to the general design. Thus, having discharged the function of a directory, the poster is generally content. It gives no liveliness to our streets; it lights up no dull corner with an unexpected gaiety. Ten years ago the advertisement was sternly practical. It appealed merely to the literary instincts of such persons as would rather read match-boxes than nothing at all, and when it limited itself to information it gave the less offence. But now its ambition is higher than its performance, and while it easily drives into our brain an unnecessary address, it distresses our nerves by repellent colour or imbecile design.

Far otherwise does Paris decorate her streets. Even the little round towers, lit within and covered with many-coloured play-bills, are not without a certain elegance; while the posters which adorn the boulevards are often miracles of fancy. They at any rate are composed with another object than to serve as sign-posts to shop or theatre. The artists who design them forget neither the space which they will occupy nor the light that will envelope them. They are neither pictures turned to an illegitimate purpose nor printed announcements obscured by pictorial commentary. They are merely posters; that is all, and they are an intimate part of the Parisian landscape.

A return to London, then, is a return to sombre walls and ugly hoardings, which makes the regret for Paris all the sharper. Nor is it only on her walls that London exhibits her dinginess. She is duskier than of yore, and the thickening darkness is due neither to more frequent fogs, nor to a heavier fall of that black snow which covers books and furniture alike. The truth is that the houses of London are growing loftier and are casting longer shadows. The passion for flats, combined with the greed of landlords, is more resolutely excluding the sun from our streets. The extravagance which once gave even the poor man a cottage to himself in the midst of a great city was not merely a declaration of independence. True, the Englishman's house is his castle, and it was his castle in London not that the accuracy of a proverb might be demonstrated, but because, where every ray of sunlight must be caught, the roofs should not touch the sky. London, in fact, ought always to remain a city of low houses. A southern town delights in many storeys and a narrow street, for it provides a shelter from the sun as well as a path for the traveller. But London is not too rich in light, and it is forced, moreover, to fight the fog from November to March. Three or four storeys, then, and a wide road are London's reasonable necessity, which is clean forgotten by those who, sacrificing amenity to gold, would build their blocks as high as those *insulae* which darkened the sunlit spaces of ancient Rome.

And not only are the new blocks, which cleave the clouds in every corner of London, tall enough to ensure darkness; they are composed of a red brick and a black mortar which would darken the gaiety of a Southern capital. After an hour spent in the neighbourhood of Victoria Street,



cross the Park, and contrast the gloomy mansions which have depressed your sight with the well-built, finely-proportioned houses of Mayfair. For in this quarter you may still discover many a house perfectly harmonised to its environment. Whatever decoration relieves its uniform front is simple and appropriate. Its mouldings are at once strong and elegant. If pillars support the doorway, they are light and taper, while the fanlights are often masterpieces of their kind. But above all, if the sky be cloudless, the sun may shine down over the housetops in the street, and time was when, not only in the neighbourhood of Park Lane but even in far distant Whitechapel, the architects remembered that London was a city of the dark North, and built their houses upon a properly modest scale. Moreover, the Englishman can (or could) build houses; he cannot (though he could) build palaces. There are many streets in London which need not fear comparison with the miracles of domestic architecture which distinguish the Hague or Amsterdam. But, having admired Somerset House from the river, you will seek in vain a single lofty block which would not appear mean and inelegant by the side of the tall, well-designed masterpieces which were built when Louis the Fifteenth and his grandson sat upon the throne of France.

The tall flats of London, then, exclude the sun, and being built of materials which absorb rather than reflect the light increase the gloom of city and suburb alike. But the folly of councils and architects cannot abolish the immemorial grandeur of our capital. While Paris is touched by the finger of beauty, London preserves intact her ancient character. Perhaps *characters* would better represent the truth, since there is no corner of London which is not stamped in-

delibly with its own mark. Blindfold a lover of London, and remove his bandage in any street you please, and a quick glance at the houses, a half-look at the passers-by, will tell him where he is. And this character, which is always interesting, even though it be not beautiful, is due to the gradual and wayward growth of London. For London is not a carefully planned city like Paris or Berlin; it was not designed and built with a definite plan, or by one consistent intellect. It assumed the shape it wears to-day as the waste spaces were covered which yawned between country town and country town. So it is that certain corners of Westminster and of Kensington, of Chelsea and of Mile End, have preserved through all improvements the air of the provinces. Now you come upon a remote square, a hundred yards from bustle and smoke, where only a rare footfall is heard; now the mast of a ship is suddenly visible at a street-end, and a mob of long-shoreman surprises you with its rolling gait and strange habit of speech. Cross Westminster Bridge and watch the crowd hustling to find a place on the tram-car, and you will find a people which neither in type nor costume resembles that which rides in omnibuses on the other side of the river. It is true that while one parish differs widely from another, they all share certain qualities which distinguish the whole from any other city in Europe; yet they differ so violently among themselves, that it is idle to find a formula which will express them all. Not even the gaiety of Paris is so remarkable as London's stern and sometimes forbidding variety; the virtues and vices of Havre, Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, and Paris itself are all packed together on the banks of the Thames. Factories, docks, markets, warehouses, theatres, hovels, mansions are jumbled

and thrown down within the boundaries of London. Here, indeed, there is nothing that you may not see. You may find a street where not a single shop bears an English name; you may arrive at a station where black-visaged, red-turbaned porters seize your luggage without warning or apology; you may mount a single staircase in a dingy house and find live lions for sale; or you may happen on a cheap circus and be stoned for daring to enter it in a black coat. Paris, too, has her distant quarters, such as La Villette and St. Ouen, which a stranger enters with a guide, and is happy to leave with a whole skin. But these quarters are appointed for a special purpose, and not even the risk run by the wayfarer is a just cause of surprise. Indeed, the real, circumscribed Paris hides her squalor by distributing it, whereas London sets up a ring-fence here and there and drives her poor within it. In London the starving man may be a near neighbour of the wealthiest banker; but the banker knows naught of the poverty that grinds at the bottom of his back-garden, and he knows naught because he does not look very far between his front-door and his brougham. Yet should curiosity seize him, he might find many a small island of starvation divided by a narrow strait from the mainland of mansions. Paris, on the other hand, does not mass her paupers, she sends them aloft. Prosperity decreases as it mounts the stairs, and under the same roof may live (at different altitudes) a judge of the Appeal Court and a poor seamstress. In other words London makes a horizontal, Paris a vertical division of rich and poor; and since not even the most curious investigator can wantonly climb five storeys, the joyous face of Paris seldom reveals the signs of desolation and misery.

Thus it is that London amazes the returned traveller by its silent, monumental immensity,—amazes and depresses him at the same time. But there is one beauty of London which Paris does not share. London, save when the wind is in the East, has an atmosphere which sanctifies ugliness. Paris is cut out with a hard precision that makes you sigh for the warm, comfortable fog. The colour and aspect of London change a dozen times a day; the colour and aspect of Paris shift only as day turns to night.

But life does not live on picturesqueness alone: the eye is not sole tyrant of the mind; and when you have weighed London against Paris in the balance of your approval, when you have determined that, while London should best suit the romantic temperament, Paris ought to attract the sympathy of the true classic, one question is still unanswered: where may a man of lofty aspirations and modest income more easily enjoy himself? An answer is difficult, because the preference must depend upon character, prejudice, and temperament. But in the first place an Englishman, before he attempts to resolve his doubt, must put aside the false impression stubbornly created by the newspapers. Of course, if Paris be a common bear-garden, where Jew fights Gentile, and Gentile has no other ambition than the torture of innocent men, it is plainly loathsome and uninhabitable. But Paris is not the city of wild hysteria which her journals represent. Apart from her Press, she is quiet to indifference. A complete absence of censorship has encouraged a set of wild beasts to scurrility, and scurrility is profitable in Paris, as it is profitable wherever it be unlicensed. But Paris lives and smiles in contemptuous toleration of epigrammatic

falsehood; and she may be most resolutely bent upon amusing herself, at the very moment when the rest of Europe suspects a revolution. Of course a revolution is never impossible, because a body of Frenchmen may always lose control of its nerves. Yet disturbance is an episode to a life of pleasure, and it does not interrupt our argument to acknowledge that Paris has not the talent of politics. For politics do but touch the fringe of life, and many a bad government has made for gaiety. Which is it then, Paris or London, for a sanely conducted life? As I have said, it depends upon temperament. The one is the home of pleasure, the other of comfort. Paris wears the open smile of joyousness upon her face. London is like a Moorish palace, whose dark, austere outside is a deceptive cloak to the luxury within. The Parisian loves his *café*: the Londoner haunts his club; and while the one sits at a public corner, which for him is the navel of the world, the other rigidly excludes the people, and takes a certain delight in boring himself where no stranger may witness the comfortable process. Thus you may typify the contrast between London and Paris; here the club, there the *café*, which with their different advantages correspond to the difference in the national temperament.

But those who can appreciate a life in the open air will give their suffrages to the boulevards. Many years since Mme. Metternich with perfect justice described Paris as the *cabaret* of Europe, and when so intelligent a people as the Parisians sets itself to the keeping of taverns, its success is triumphant. Nowhere else in the world may you live with the cheap elegance which is universal in Paris. There, indeed, is the art of living understood with absolute cunning.

"The French alone," said Chateaubriand, who was as little blind to his country's qualities as to his country's defects, "the French alone know how to dine with method, as they alone know how to compose a book." It is no doubt a part of their perfect logic. Dinner is an inevitable pleasure; therefore, simple or extravagant, it shall be perfect. Thus in Paris you may vary your experience a hundred times and never be disappointed. If fortune be kind to you and money jingles in your pocket, you may sit in a little window on the Quai des Grands Augustins, and eat such a dinner as London could never design. Or you may admire the white walls and the peerless cook of the *Café Anglais*, whose decadence you need not deplore with the journals so long as the dinner is cooked to a point and the delicate wine soothes your palate. And if fortune frown, are there not a dozen modest taverns hidden in dark streets or darker passages, where you may find (for nothing) such a dinner as few aldermen are permitted to consume? Only on the one hand you must avoid the vast hotels, whose plate-glass dining-rooms are expected to pay a proper percentage, and on the other hand those respectable eating-houses which give you your bill at the door, and which expect you to feed without amenity and with an unhappy despatch.

In the scheme of life, food and drink take up a large and merited space, and this space London denies to our delight. True it is that in the seclusion of a club you may dine with tranquil luxury, but there are times at which the fancy roams and when a row of familiar, contented faces appals the stoutest heart. But where shall we go to beguile our leisure? Where can we find a modest dinner and a bottle of sound wine? Certain restaurants there are where, if you have

a full purse and are dressed for the evening, you may survey the rich man at his dinner. Yet it is not entertaining; surprise is rare either in food or company, and after a very narrow experience both taste and economy suggest a simple steak and an evening paper quietly digested in a solemn corner of Pall Mall.

And when you have drunk your coffee, which is not always palatable in London, where shall you go to amuse yourself? To a music-hall, and be horrified by a raffish vulgarity? To a theatre where you shall hear an actor, who has not learned to speak, mouth the lines of a dramatist, who has not learned to write? No, not even if you can afford half-a-guinea for a seat! In Paris, on the other hand, an evening need never be dull. If the *cafés* tire you with their ceaseless movement, their infinite variety of type and character, then there are a dozen tiny theatres which invite you to entertainment and applause. You may go to the Tréteau de Tabarin, and delight in the topical songs of M. Fursy. If it be the summer, you may dine in the open air of the Ambassadeurs, and listen to Yvette or her successor. Or you may drive into the Bois, and listen as you drink your coffee in an enchanted pavilion to the wild strains of gipsy music. Or you may go to the Théâtre Français and marvel at the beautiful simplicity of a traditional art. Or you may see Sarah Bernhardt in her repertory, and even with luck you may witness this generation's supreme triumph of dramatic art, Coquelin as Tartuffe. All these joys are possible to you for a modest sum, and if they please not your idle taste, then there is the *café*, and still the *café*, and the *café* till one in the morning.

In London, then, life is solemn and demure. The unwonted comfort, the unusual calm persuades us to the dis-

cussion of literature or philosophy. It compels us to exchange dominoes for whist, a chance acquaintance for a solid friendship. A library soon takes the place of the *café*, and the home-comer is seduced by the sterner pleasures of virtue from the habit of trivial idleness. Which is better? Again I say it is a matter of temperament. Which is cheaper? Paris assuredly. For on the banks of the Seine, if no business disturb your leisure, you may buy twice as much for your money as on the banks of the Thames. There, indeed, you need not count your income for an inexorable tax; you need not starve yourself to pay such a rent as will claim you the respect of your fellows. For you may live, in Paris, where you will and at what altitude suits your convenience. And if you be really poor the payment of a single glass will give you shelter, and newspapers, and amusement for a whole afternoon. Then if the chase amuse you, you may wander up and down the Quais, hunting the rare books which now and then escape notice at the bottom of the box. Your bag is likely to be small: you may tramp many an unrewarded mile; but while there are trees overhead, the river is at your feet, and the collector will find it more amusing to turn over the cheap novels which may conceal a treasure, than to study the cold type of a bookseller's catalogue. In brief, if there were no such thing as nationality, no such virtue as patriotism, I should say, by all means take care to be born in London and, once grown to man's estate, to spend your life in Paris.

But happily there is a virtue called patriotism, there is a sentiment which endears to your heart an ugly prospect and a bad dinner. A tough steak may evoke a pleasant memory, and even were it not for the splendid character of London there would still

be a reason for living out your days in your native land. To be abroad in a time of stress is for a man of spirit an intolerable affliction. How can we listen with equanimity to the partial (or impartial) discussion of a situation which involves our country's honour? The man who wakes up in his own land has at least a sense of home; the trees, the birds, the roads of the country, the cabs, the clubs, the parks of town are all familiar to him. Beyond that, he knows, if he have any faith in the government of the hour, that he can endorse the collective opinion of his fellow-men. So he may go through life with his nerves calm, and with no single bristle of antagonism on end. Moreover, he may enjoy the pleasure of a simple, unconstrained friendship, in which

silence is as highly privileged as speech, and in which a sign is as clearly intelligible as words. Nor can these advantages ever be counter-balanced by material luxury. In a strange city an Englishman may make many pleasant acquaintances; he will rarely make a single sincere friend. None the less the years spent abroad will be profitable beyond their momentary enjoyment; for absence reveals the less obvious virtues of our own land, and provides a standard of measurement, which the home-keeping man will ever lack. Moreover, London for two reasons is superior to Paris as it is superior to all cities in the world. It is inhabited by Englishmen, and through it flows the incomparable Thames.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

## THE STATE OF SUZERAINTY.

At the present crisis there should be no apology needed for trying to ascertain the precise signification of the term Suzerainty. Perhaps *precise* is rather a rash word, if we may judge by the remarkably diverse opinions held by statesmen and lawyers as to the attributes which distinguish a suzerain Power. A few extracts from the debates which took place in Parliament, when the terms of the Convention made between this country and the South African Republic in 1881 were discussed, will be sufficient to convince the reader how little finality there is about the bare expression. Lord Selborne, then Lord Chancellor, gave it as his opinion that Suzerainty meant that the suzerain was lord-paramount of the people who were subject to his vassalage: that the control of the foreign and frontier relations essentially distinguished a paramount Power; and that no war could be made upon adjoining native tribes, and no treaty concluded with foreign Powers, except by the authority of the suzerain. From this it may be inferred that the Chancellor considered that a vassal State had full control over its internal affairs, an inference supported by Lord Kimberley's intimation that the word imparted the assignment to the vassal of "independent power as regards its internal government." On the other hand, Lord Cairns, a past Lord Chancellor and a lawyer of at least equal eminence, after quoting Sir Evelyn Wood's statement, that the country was to have entire self-government as regards its own interior affairs, but that it could not take action against or with an

outside Power without permission of the suzerain, expressed his belief that the reservation of foreign relations did not sufficiently define the meaning of the word, for if it were so, the sovereignty of Great Britain would be suzerain of Afghanistan in consequence of the arrangement with the Amir; while Lord Salisbury suggested that the existence of Suzerainty did not preclude interference with the internal affairs of the vassal.

Where the divergence of opinion among the doctors is so wide, the ordinary man must tread with care, more especially when he finds that the text-books on International Law treat this question somewhat lightly. The conclusion one is forced to is that, although the fundamental conditions of Suzerainty are definite enough, there are a number of incidents which vary materially in each individual instance; and this conclusion is substantiated by a writer whose special province is outside the Law of Nations. The truth of the matter possibly is that the term was introduced into International Law from the feudal system, in which it originated, as a convenient method of describing a connection existing between two States, one of which had certain rights of control over the other, without a very definite conception of the limitation which should be placed on its use.

In Calvo's *DICTIONNAIRE DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL* we find that the term Suzerainty was employed in the Middle Ages to describe the position of an over-lord who owed justice and protection to his vassals, while they, in



return, owed him homage, followed him to war, and paid him various kinds of dues. The term may have borne this looser meaning at a comparatively late period of the feudal era, but a more exact, and probably more correct definition of the position originally occupied by the suzerain is afforded by Pothier. Tenure in full fief and in under fief, the latter informs us, are thus distinguished: a heritage is held in full fief from a seignory when allegiance is due directly to the lord of the seignory; when allegiance is not due directly to the superior lord, but is owed to a vassal of the seignory, then there is an under fief. The holder in full fief is called simply vassal in relation to the lord of the seignory, and the lord, in relation to him, is called lord simply. The holder of the under fief is called under vassal in relation to the lord of the seignory, and that lord, in relation to him, is called lord paramount (*seigneur suzerain*). The under vassal is not properly the vassal of the lord of the seignory, inasmuch as he has not undertaken any duty towards him, so that the rule applies *vassallus mei non est meus vassallus*; but he may and will effectively become vassal in case of the reuniting of his fief with that of which it is held, or in case the lord reunites with his own holding that of his immediate vassal.

As the term has been incorporated into International Law it evidently approaches more closely to the definition given by Calvo than to that of Pothier, and it is obvious, if some of the acknowledged cases of the relationship of suzerain and vassal are carefully considered (those of Turkey to Roumania or Egypt, for instance, and of Great Britain to the Transvaal) that the reciprocal duties are by no means identical. Mr. Hall, in his work on International Law, treats the

relationship in a very general manner. States under the Suzerainty of others are, he says, portions of the latter, which during a process of gradual disruption, or by the grace of the sovereign, have acquired certain of the powers of an independent community, such as that of making commercial conventions, or of confirming the appointment of foreign consuls. Their position differs from that of confederated or protected States, inasmuch as a presumption exists against their possession of any international capacity. A member of a confederation, or a protected State is *prima facie* independent, and consequently possesses all rights which it has not expressly resigned; a State under Suzerainty, being admittedly part of another State, has those rights only which have been expressly granted to it, and the assumption of larger powers of external action than those which have been distinctly conceded to it is an act of rebellion. Here Mr. Hall appears to agree with Lords Selborne and Kimberley that the vassal State is entitled to the independent management of its internal affairs. His description of the relative positions of suzerain and vassal will, however, scarcely harmonise with all the cases in which the relationship exists or has existed, and Dr. Stubbs, in an article in THE LAW MAGAZINE for 1882, has provided us with more detailed and exhaustive information on this intricate question.

States subject to vassalage may be divided into two classes, according to whether the vassalage is unmodified by express terms (is a *nude vassalage*, as it has been called), or the vassalage has been modified by express terms of a more or less onerous description. As regards the former class there is, it appears, practical unanimity among the authorities, whether they be writers on Inter-

national Law generally, or have more particularly considered the subject of national seignory, that States falling within it do possess the status of international persons. This view presents some difficulty, for clearly the possession of sovereign rights should entitle the possessors to external as well as internal control, and it is questionable how far a State which is in a condition of vassalage to another can be said to have control of its external relations. Dr. Stubbs, however, considers the position of the States in this class as closely analogous to that of persons who under the feudal system rendered plain or simple homage, which involved only the obligation to be faithful and to render service in war by deputy.

If it be necessary to determine which of the three kinds of homage (*i.e.*, ordinary, plain, or liege) was the one due from a sovereign vassal, it will appear that it could only be the plain or simple homage, the *homagium feudale*. R  al, indeed, says that the simple homage is the kind rendered by those who, without being by the nature of their fiefs in any dependence on another prince, yet render homage for the purpose of obtaining protection. This is exactly the case of the sovereign vassal States. . . . Whether the form of simple homage was that adopted in the case of sovereign vassalages or not is, however, of little consequence. It is sufficient to recognise that the special characteristics of the other two kinds of homage were from the nature of the seignories absent in the case of sovereign vassalages, and that their duties were therefore only fidelity, respect, and such service as one sovereign State can render to another.

That service with the suzerain in time of war was, and still may be a condition of such a vassalage, is proved by the fact that Egypt sent a military contingent to the assistance of Turkey in the Turko-Russian War; but the liability to the jurisdiction of the suzerain, involved in both ordinary and liege homage, has

always been absent from the relationship of Suzerainty and vassalage between States, as is clear from the case of the Transvaal, where the right of appeal to Her Majesty in Council determined as soon as that State became autonomous. And plain homage being the rule as between States, it would seem to be beyond dispute that, where there have been no express conditions limiting the rights of the vassal, the vassal State is regarded as *de facto* sovereign, and possesses in full all the rights consequent on the attributes of sovereignty, subject only to a restriction against the exercise of those rights in a manner derogatory to the due rendering of fidelity, service, and respect to its suzerain. It possesses the right of embassy, both towards its suzerain and to foreign States, the right of negotiation and of entering into treaties, the right of making wars and alliances with third Powers, though the two last rights must not be exercised to the prejudice of the suzerain Power. In the instance of war, the duty of fidelity would apparently forbid the vassal to take up arms against the suzerain, but since, as Dr. Stubbs observes, "Suzerainty gives no right of interference with the affairs of the vassal, but only to certain services, so an attempt to interfere with its freedom or other privileges may, it is presumed, be justly repelled by force." This, of course, does not prevent the suzerain from intervening in the internal affairs of its vassal in those cases in which it would be lawfully entitled to intervene in those of a State of its own standing, in order, for instance, to protect its subjects from ill-usage, or where the misgovernment of the vassal State is such as to react injuriously on the prosperity of the suzerain. It shows, however,

that the title of Suzerainty alone is not sufficient to justify intervention, except where the ordinary meaning of the word has been modified by express agreement between the suzerain and vassal Powers.

The extent to which service is due from the vassal State to its suzerain is deserving of a moment's consideration. It is perfectly clear that such service must always be rendered when the suzerain is in extremity, since that is a necessary corollary from the duty of mutual protection essential to the condition of vassalage; and it would seem that assistance is bound to be rendered during the continuance of all wars waged by the suzerain State, if such assistance is required. "As all vassals owed service," writes Dr. Stubbs, "limited or unlimited, personal or by deputy, without reference to the danger of the suzerain, but merely to his need, the service must therefore have been due in every war waged by the suzerain, and vassal States should be equally liable, while, as has been shown in the case of Naples, the practice appears to bear out the principle."

To come now to the second class of vassalage: where vassal States have been erected capable of sovereignty, the question whether they are or are not actually sovereign may become a matter of some perplexity. The vassal is clearly a sovereign State if so defined by the terms of the convention of settlement. When in former times princes intended to create non-sovereign vassals, they in most cases expressly reserved the sovereignty to themselves. The inference accordingly was that sovereignty, if not verbally retained, was included in the grant and became an attribute of the vassal seignory. It would, however, seem to be a fair presumption at the present day, that if the suzerain Power is found to be in the exercise of some

of the rights which would naturally belong to the vassal were it a sovereign State, sovereignty has been reserved by the suzerain, and we may take it that there are few instances of Suzerainty in modern times in which there has not been, in one way or another, a reservation of the abstract rights of sovereignty from the grant. Where this reservation has been made, where, in other words, the Suzerainty is not plainly nominal, the vassal State can, of course, only exercise such rights as have been granted to it by the instrument to which it owes its existence.

The liabilities already mentioned as attaching to nude vassalages, attach equally, it need hardly be said, to States whose vassalage is not of so nominal a character. What, however, are the rights of sovereignty which may be deducted from the grant without creating nude vassalage on the one hand, or complete subjection on the other, it is rather difficult to determine. The vassal State must obviously be allowed some power of internal control to remove it from the second category, while it would seem probable that all, and not merely some of, the external or international rights of sovereignty must be retained by the suzerain, if the latter is desirous of maintaining any real control over its vassal's actions. The relation between Egypt and the Porte is fairly representative of the second kind of vassalage, and shows in addition how Suzerainty may undergo subsequent modification in one direction or the other. In 1840 the administration of the Pachalic was granted by the Sultan of Turkey to Mehemet Ali and his descendants in the direct line, with the right to collect and retain to his own profit taxes and customs, and to maintain military and naval forces. But complete internal control was not granted;

there was no right of legislation, and the laws of the Ottoman Empire were to apply to Egypt. The powers then conferred were confirmed and extended at various subsequent dates, and complete autonomy, including the right of legislation, was given by a firman of 1867, even to the extent of entering into arrangements with foreign agents in furtherance of the financial and commercial interests of the country. The original sovereign rights of the Porte were, however, expressly reserved, and Egypt could

conclude no treaties with any political signification.

From what has been said it will be understood that Suzerainty is a word which may express very distinct degrees of relationship between the parties which it connects; but if the bare term does not convey very precise information as to the rights and duties existing in a particular instance, it at least indicates the limits within which those rights and duties may be sought for.

TEMPLAR.

## A VISIT TO THE DENTIST.

THE life of an Englishwoman in one of the little wooden towns away out on the American prairies must, I am bound to say, be described as monotonous ; while, if she cannot adapt herself to circumstances and make the best of her surroundings, her fate is indeed pitiful. Housekeeping is a very simple affair, when the household goods are kept at an irreducible minimum with no opportunity of throwing away money on furniture, for the good reason that there is none to be got in the place ; and when all your rooms are on the ground-floor, in case of danger from fire, there is little trouble in keeping things straight. Shopping is an impossibility, and in the matter of clothes, all you have to do is to wear out the stock of old ones which you brought with you. Cooking is of the sort called plain, and your only trouble is to be able to provide variety enough.

With the Canadian women, the case is different. Their whole time is occupied in multiplying labour about the house ; they bake their own bread, and are adepts at wonderful cakes built up in different-coloured layers ; when they sit down, they are for ever sewing or knitting, making useless articles with which they adorn their bedrooms or decorate the walls ; books they never look at, and when nothing else remains, they upset the whole place in order to put it to rights again.

I knew one farmer's wife who made about ten different kinds of preserves from the various wild berries that grow in the bluffs, and when you can

buy such delicacies for a trifle, and capital bread from some excellent woman in town for a dollar a dozen, it would be foolish to bother about it yourself. You might amuse yourself with rearing fowls and getting eggs when there were none to be procured for love or money ; and of an afternoon in summer you might wander over the prairie in search of wild flowers, many of which are the originals of those growing in the gardens at home. Sometimes there was a dance at a farmer's house in the country, or a picnic to the Qu'appelle valley when work was slack in the fine weather ; otherwise there was nothing but whist, and that generally involved an expedition to some Englishman's house at a distance ; though I confess I have known Jack on an election-day to suspend the polling for half-an-hour or more, on the ostensible ground that voters were not coming in, but really for the purpose of retiring to a back-room with the election-clerk and the poll-clerk (both English, needless to say,) for the sake of a quiet rubber. But this, I think, exhausts the list in a general way, and afterwards you must fall back upon the study of the ways and customs of the natives.

In the face of such monotony it will be readily seen that a very slight cause is hailed as an excuse for a diversion, and on this particular occasion, it was that simple but obtrusive matter, a tooth-ache. Is that all, you ask ? Then why not go into the next street and find the nearest dentist ? Quite so, but in the first place, there were no streets at the

Hump, and in the second, there was no dentist. The nearest was Ozanne, a desultory young man who had found his way out from the Channel Islands and located at Poplar Bluffs,<sup>1</sup> about twenty miles east on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Like everybody else he had taken up land, though knowing absolutely nothing about farming, and having exhausted his funds before leaving the old country, in a vain endeavour to manage a theatre in a provincial town, he had to fall back on his profession to eke out a living, visiting the different settlements once a month or so with a little black bag. But as tooth-ache would not wait for a casual dentist, there was nothing for it but an expedition on one's own account.

Fortunately there was no trouble about getting a train out, for Buffalo Hump was an important point on the railway where the freight-trains stayed over all night and were made up afresh to start east and west in the morning. There was no other train but the mail which went east in the middle of the night, and that was out of the question. So having left Jack with a cold prairie-chicken and an apple-pie,—a flat one baked in a tin-plate, Canadian fashion, and made of course with evaporated apples cut in rings, for the bouncing red-cheeked article was unknown out West in those times—I made my way over to the station a little before six, and after groping about the yard among the trucks, and dodging various engines which were clanging their bells and running to and fro in an aimless fashion, I discovered the freight-train by accident on an out-of-the-way line of rails, and climbed up into the caboose. There are no

passenger-cars on these trains, so you have to do the best you can with the conductor's car, which is coupled on behind, and appears to serve him and his mates for sleeping-room, kitchen, and living in general, while odd benches fill occasional spaces at the sides of the car.

There was a fine aroma of fried bacon, which made me feel quite hungry (one is mostly hungry on the prairie) and the conductor was engaged in cleaning his frying-pan and tidying the place, while his two or three friends were preparing to enjoy their early cigar, which however they carefully returned to their breast-pockets when I appeared, for these men are always very polite. They gave me the best seat in the caboose, which was a home-made chair built entirely of wood and far more comfortable than any you can buy at a London shop, the back being high and fixed at the correct angle for producing sleep, the seat sloping gently towards the rear, and the sides at the exact height at which you can rest your arms.

In one corner of the caboose is a flight of iron steps leading up to a look-out place where there is an official turn-about easy chair for the conductor, and windows all round above the roof of the car, and here you have a full view of the prairie. After the train had rolled slowly out of the yard, with no other warning than the solemn clanging of the deep-toned engine-bell, and we had got well away from the houses and round Dead-Horse Hill, he asked if I would like to sit up there. Would I not indeed!

The sun was shining out of an absolutely clear sky, as it does for weeks together, and the vista of gently-rolling prairie sometimes stretched for miles on each side of you, until it sunk into the horizon. The train wound its way along in

<sup>1</sup> Bluffs is a Canadian misnomer for wooded country, as distinguished from the open prairie; it by no means signifies rocky or hilly ground.



front like a great serpent over the single line of rails visible far ahead until lost to view in a wider curve than usual. After a while the bluffs on the Indian Reserve came near on the left, the sun shining on the light trunks of the young poplars, a favourite spot for the farmers when they wanted to appropriate a load of wood without any risk of discovery. Prairie-fires, however, were sadly reducing the trees, and nobody seemed to interfere to prevent this destruction. Sometimes the remains of a last year's hay-stack were seen near the line, surrounded by the fire-break which some careful man had ploughed, and once we had to call a halt while the conductor and fireman dropped down to drive some cattle off the track, for they will often run along in front of the train on the clear space ahead, instead of having the sense to sheer off. Half-way on the journey we came to sidings, where some day there would be a station, and here was an empty car being loaded with trusses of fresh hay by some lucky man who had secured a Government contract for the Indian Department, or the Mounted Police perhaps. As we got near Poplar Bluffs the woods closed in on each side, giving the place an entirely different appearance from the approaches to the Hump, where we had respectable hills on both sides of us; but along the whole distance not a sign of a human habitation was there beyond a solitary Indian *teepee* in a sheltered creek, thanks to the short-sighted policy of the Dominion Government in reserving the land from settlement for a considerable distance, never less than a mile, on both sides of the railway. Certainly this gave you a good idea of the original wilderness, but none whatever of improvements effected by hard-working settlers.

The arrival of a train is the loadstone for all the idlers in a prairie-town, the one thing that connects them with the existence of the great world outside; it was natural therefore that, as I alighted on the platform, I should catch sight of someone I thought I knew. Sure enough, it was Teddy Willoughby, an amiable young Yorkshire giant, whose land was somewhere near here, only he was sneaking off in the direction of the freight-shed. His costume was the picturesque sort of thing that looks so well in a sketch, a broad-brimmed felt hat, that had once been white, cocked on the side of his head, blue flannel shirt and corduroys, and an old blue and black striped smoking-jacket, the property of himself and his brother. He must have seen me as I was getting down, for when I called after him, he stopped and looked ashamed of himself.

"Well, Mrs. Bellasis," said he, "who would have thought of seeing you at this hour of the morning! If I had known you would be here, I should have put my stockings on." And glancing down I saw there was a considerable gap of brown skin between his great unlaced boots and the corduroys.

"But this is the correct costume of these parts, isn't it?" I asked. "Can I get breakfast anywhere?"

"Over at old Busby's; but there'll be no breakfast till eight o'clock."

"Then," said I, "I may as well see the dentist first."

Now Ozanne, having no house of his own, had his quarters at Mugridge's Store, being the sort of man who always depends upon somebody else; but when we got there, the place was still wrapped in slumber.

"He told me I should always find him here at this time of day," I observed.

"Oh yes," said Teddy, "he's here

right enough, because he's in bed ;" and after considerable kicking and thumping at the door, a sleepy-looking man made his appearance and let us in. He seemed rather disappointed when he found we had not come to buy him out, and after more thumping at a door at the further end Ozanne showed himself. His consulting-room consisted of a space at the back of the store screened by a curtain, and here he succeeded in ridding me of the offending tooth, having on a previous occasion carefully extracted a perfectly sound one, for which, however, he profusely apologised.

This over, I made for Busby's, a gentleman who was said to have retired from the Civil Service on a pension. Upon making enquiries, I found that he had had charge of the sticks and umbrellas at the National Gallery ; I thought I had seen him somewhere.

The hotel was a crazy building of the original prairie sort, put up when lumber was poor and dear, and now in consequence verging on debility. No more disheartening place to drag through a day in could well be imagined. Comfort was an impossibility, for the law of Prohibition being strictly in force, no landlord could afford any outlay for the purpose ; his profits were of the smallest, made out of the simplest meals at twenty-five cents apiece, and less if you took a quantity.

In due course a dozen dreary-looking individuals seated themselves at the long table, and breakfast was served, — a ladle-full of porridge slapped into the middle of a plate, then a slice of ham, or a piece of steak cut from an ox that was too old for the plough, and the inevitable tea. The bread and butter, however, were good, and this you might alleviate with molasses, which is to say treacle ; but I noticed that the know-

ing ones spread a layer of brown sugar over their bread-and-butter, and made it into a sandwich. I can recommend this plan with confidence.

Upon Teddy turning up again after breakfast, I asked him where I could get any books. What did I want books for ? To while away the day until the evening mail passed through. That, he suggested, was perfectly absurd ; I had much better go out with them to old McDermot's farm. He was stopping there, and they had come in to get a plough-share sharpened, but it would not be ready yet, so we could go out and come back again before evening.

The chance was not to be missed, for I had often wanted to pry into the *ménage* of the lonely bachelor farmer,—the genuine article as contrasted with the sort who *clurks* it in a village-store all day, and puts in his government requirements by purporting to rush off every evening for half the year, and sleep at his *shack*, paying other men to do the work. I gladly therefore accepted the offer, promising to cook their dinner for them if he would drive me back before evening.<sup>1</sup>

Old McDermot turned out to be a brisk young Scotchman of forty or so, and while Teddy and I climbed on to the driving-board McDermot stowed his salt and lard and nails and things into the hay in the bottom of the wagon, and then curled himself up by the side of them to finish his night's sleep. The team of stolid oxen lifted their noses into the air, and off we jolted. There are no reins ; the only driving required is to give demoniacal yells at the cattle, and a touch with the stick on the side of the head by

<sup>1</sup> I should perhaps explain that in Canada an assistant in a shop or store is called a clerk, pronounced as *clurk*. A *shack* is any sort of rough wooden hut which such a man might put upon his homestead to do duty for a house.

way of steering them in the right direction.

We crossed the track, and by-and-by got out of the scanty wood on to the open prairie. Here you realised the full glory of the summer day, with a gentle breeze from the west and air that it is pure luxury to breathe. That is the eternal delight of the prairie, which is nowhere else to be surpassed. On and on went the trail, which is nothing but the track worn over the grass into a smooth hard surface by the constant traffic of the farmers going to and from the village. I once read in a book written by an Englishwoman, that "a trail is made by skinning the turf from a strip of ground wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass each other." How she could possibly conceive that such an amazing piece of work could be accomplished, who would have the ordering of it and the settlement of the route over miles of wilderness, or who would do the actual ploughing, when men mostly cannot find time to plough fire-guards for their own stacks and buildings, passes my comprehension. Besides, turning over the light soil would only result in a thick dust-track in dry weather and in mud when it was wet, with a rank crop of coarse weeds on each side.

After a while something seemed to go wrong with the oxen; they stood stock still, and refused to move a step further.

"Mrs. Bellasis," said Teddy, "may I swear? It's hopeless to attempt to go on any longer like this, for they don't understand politeness." I begged him to make himself understood and then he poured forth a volley of unintelligible uproar, which possibly was in the Yorkshire dialect, but it had the desired effect, and there were no more stoppages.

Every now and then prairie-chickens would flutter up and off with a rush,

making Teddy lament the want of his gun,—which is the usual thing, when you have the chance of a shot; and another time a great skunk came tearing along, though fortunately too frightened to come near. In one spot, not more than a hundred yards from the trail, we saw a couple of foxes sitting at the mouth of their earth with their cubs playing around them, quite undisturbed at the sight of us. Beyond this there were no signs of life, which is the thing that astonishes one most in a long drive like this away from the railway-track. You know that the prairie is dotted with settlers, for you have the evidence of the wagon-trail before your eyes, with fainter trails branching off every now and then; but it is rare indeed to catch sight of a shanty, or a struggling field of young wheat or oats. All is still and wild and desolate; and here and there the trail will wind past a lonely slough in a hollow surrounded by flowering willows, and there the grass would be long, and much sought after by the farmers for the winter's hay.

At last Teddy announced that the house was in sight, though I could see nothing like it. There was a mound not far off covered with sods, which might have been a heap of turf, or a stack of firewood, or roots, but certainly not to be recognised for anything else. Nevertheless it turned out to be the house, but the trail had led us round to the back, and the entrance was on the other side.

Farm-houses on the prairie are of various kinds, according to the means of the farmer; this was of the dug-out order, though not entirely, for the dug-out pure and simple is hollowed out of the side of a hill, like a cave, the sides and roof being shored up as you dig inwards. It was about half-underground, a wide slope leading

down to the doorway, where a lot of fowls were patiently waiting to be fed, the window being long and narrow and level with the ground on the outside.

It was a fairly big comfortable room, with furniture of the box, board, and nail-keg order. The covering of sods which I had seen formed the outside of the roof, and these had been skilfully laid on branches, and compacted together to keep out the cold and wet. The upper part of the hut was of logs, and inside, across the middle, was a great beam supported by the trunk of a tree firmly fixed into the ground, which was trampled quite hard and smooth, so that it could easily be swept with a broom. The sunshine poured in at the window, and the place looked as cheerful and pleasant as one could wish, perfectly clean and tidy, with the bunk in the corner at the further end concealed by chintz curtains drawn across it. McDermot was evidently a careful Scot. There was a book-shelf with a few books, the usual easy-chair made out of a barrel, and the table was another barrel with a couple of boards laid across the top. Besides a big sheet-iron stove, the rest of the furniture consisted mainly of boxes, bags, and harness, but everything was stowed away in its place.

Standing against the pillar in the middle was a barrel of flour, and on the top of this an orthodox paste-board. Hanging on long nails driven into the pillar were the rolling-pin, tin mug, an iron spoon, and a dipper, all used for cooking. When first McDermot showed me the flour-barrel, it struck me as a capital arrangement to have the flour so handy; but upon finding that every time you wanted to get a little more flour you had to shift the whole outfit, I concluded the plan was not worth adopting.

Without wasting time, I asked him what there was for dinner. "There's bacon," was the answer, "and you can perhaps make some biscuits."

"Make biscuits without an oven! Haven't you any bread?"

"No, we never have any bread;" and then he instructed me in the mystery of cooking biscuits in a frying-pan. The bacon was hanging on the wall, in the shape of two sides of a pig, one of which was in process of reduction. To carve this was beyond my strength, so getting out from some corner a long pointed knife, he slashed off seven or eight great rashers about a foot long, and fetched an enormous frying-pan big enough to wash a baby in. Then he produced a tin pail of lard, a jar of salt, some tin plates and cups, brought in a great armful of firewood, and went off with Teddy to look after the oxen, and possibly to make themselves presentable for dinner, leaving me in possession for an hour.

The cooking was all done on the top of the stove, where there were several large holes for pots and pans, in one of which stood a great kettle of water. The bacon was not like the toothsome article of commerce, and had to be fried in water, because of the particular way in which it was cured.

While the bacon was frying, I set to work on the biscuits, as the Canadians call them in their slipshod fashion, for they are really nothing but cakes made in the ordinary way like piecrust, and then fried with lard. The only thing I ever saw in the North-West in the shape of biscuits were called crackers. I made a good heap of these, each as big as a saucer; but they took a tremendous time to cook, and by the time they were ready, and a great pot of tea made, the men came back. Then,

serving out all round a slab of bacon and a biscuit, and a mug of tea without milk or sugar, all round, we fell to work. They said they enjoyed that dinner, and had never had such biscuits before.

After dinner McDermot proceeded to wash up, and Teddy and I adjourned to a long bench against the front of the hut. At this spot the prairie was a perfect garden of wild flowers; pink and yellow balsam, sun-flowers, Michaelmas daisies, twice as big as those in the gardens at home, and red and yellow lilies as large as a tea-cup. Here I sat and rested, made a few sketches, and by plying Teddy with a hundred questions, added to my general stock of information.

Soon, however, it was time to think of jogging back to the railway again; the oxen were hitched up, and I said good-bye to the Scotsman, promising to send him down a couple of Plymouth Rocks when I got home, if I could spare them. In the intervals of bellowing at the cattle, Teddy enlivened the journey by whistling, and finally, plucking up his courage, he shouted some of his Yorkshire songs, though the only one I can call to mind was when he apostrophised the prairie in general with *Do ye ken John Peel?* at the top of his voice. But there was no reply, and when after a while we overtook an Indian stalking across from a slough, with an old gun across his shoulder, and Teddy yelled the question at him, the Red Man only stared and said "Bo' jo'," and then held up a couple of prairie-chickens which he offered me for a *shunyus* (shilling). I handed him over a twenty-five cent piece, which would doubtless be exchanged for tea of the sort kept by the storekeepers to suit the Indian taste, coming out

very black and strong in the brewing.

As we jogged along we were fortunate enough to see one of those strange sights in the sky which seem so frequent on the prairie in comparison with those on this side of the water; and this was the strangest thing in this whole day of (to me, at least) strange experiences. It was a couple of sun-dogs, *parhelia*, I see they are called in the scientific books, though both names are equally vague to me. The sun was on its downward journey, and halfway between it and the horizon was a smaller and paler sun, with another exactly similar the same distance above; but there was no connecting band of light, as in most of the pictures of this curious phenomenon, which remained steady in the sky until we got in to Poplar Bluffs.

I caught the Western mail and reached the Hump about nine, when I was gratified to find the house had not been burnt down, and that the fowls were locked up to secure them from the attacks of foxes, as they were called for the sake of euphony. Jack was hard at work in his office copying out a long paper from Pridaux's CONVEYANCING, while on the other side of the table sat a smooth-faced young Englishman, steadily turning over the pages of a volume of PUNCH of the Du Maurier period, which was kept for such purposes.

Some days after, I was surprised to receive a letter from one McDiarmid, thanking me for the fowls which I had sent him. I concluded that this must be the full-dress name of the owner of the dug-out, and I wondered whether it would possibly occur to anybody but a Scotsman that such a simple word as McDermot could properly be spelled McDiarmid.

## WOOD WILLIAM.

TWENTY years ago you might have seen him standing on the downs near Chipping Olds, with a couple of lean dogs at his feet and the best flock of Cotswolds in Gloucestershire grazing within sight. He rested always upon his tall crook, and stared fixedly under shaggy eyebrows across the rich marsh-land beneath him to the tower of Alberstone Church above the river. In summer-time he was there all day, and often most of the night; and in the worst of weather he was not far off. For his lonely cottage and the field where he penned his sheep were close by, and they too faced westward to Alberstone.

He was a silent man and stern. Not even his dogs were intimate with him, though they knew his wishes before he uttered them. The expression in his eyes was that of a man who is always listening; listening, one might think, for the voice of Nature, with whose moods his fifty years of shepherding had brought him familiarity, not unmixed with contempt. For, could he have put his thoughts into words, he would have told you that Nature is a faithless, empty-pated wench, who promises many things which she never means to perform. When a man has borne with her tempers and welcomed her smiles for fifty years, for the sake of his sheep, he has a right to expect that she will reveal to him, for his own sake, some of the real meaning of her vagaries; that she will tell him why she has played her wanton tricks not only upon the flock, but upon the shepherd too. In the twilight of his half-conscious rustic

mind Wood William was for ever asking one question; on breathless summer afternoons, when the valley quivered in the heat and the Welsh hills beyond the Severn seemed to pant for air; on winter nights, when the cold stars looked down on the sheep huddled close in a corner of the single scrap of brown in a world of white. But Nature never answered him. Occasionally his eyes would gleam under lifted brows; a flash of grateful intelligence would cross his face; then, as the stern silence settled down on him again, he would shake his head in resignation.

Twice a month, at Marlbury Market or Brentwood Fair, he might be seen in public; a noticeable figure, not only because he clung to the dress that his fathers wore, a white smock, white breeches and gaiters and a rough beaver hat, nor for his quaint air of bewilderment, which gave the impression that he had looked too long across the valley and could not now bring his eyes into focus on any nearer object. Everyone knew him and everyone welcomed him, for it was common fact that in all the Marlbury Level there was no such knowledge of the points of a sheep, and no authority on their treatment so valuable, as that of Wood William. Man after man would seize his arm, and lead him, as if he were blind, to the pens that ran down the side of the street. A question would be asked; with incomparable shrewdness William would lean on the rail in thought, and then in one sentence give a maxim that might save his disciple £10 on



the deal, or the life of a whole flock.

Yet, when he stood erect once more and wandered off with the air of a blind man upon him again, the disciple nine times out of ten would shake his head, saying: "Ah! there be a judge of a sheep, if thou like. 'Tis a pity 'e be a wood un."

For all were agreed that William Thursfield was *wood*, or mad. If so, his was an honourable madness, the madness of Don Quixote or King Lear, which is born of the strife of high ideals with the petty bunglings of Nature or Fate. For, all unknown to himself, he was full of high thoughts, inherited, perhaps, from some long dead member of the great family he alone survived to represent. He could not see things quite as other people saw them, and the considerations which determined the conduct of his neighbours he passed over as trifles. He was an idealist, blinking in the twilight of a material world.

His parents died when he was but a boy, and he lived alone on the heights, with no desire for companionship, until he was nearly forty. Then he fell in love, suddenly and violently, as lonely men will. Betsy Riddle was his exact opposite, a showy, full-blooded woman of twenty-two, with a lawless tongue and a smutched reputation. But William was blind to her faults, seeing in her, as his habit was, something that other people could not see. He had no mother or sister to give him the disturbing results of a woman's intuitive power of reading character, and the ribald jokes made by the men at market or fair he disregarded altogether, or turned aside with a counter-accusation of jealousy. Then it was that he was first called *wood*, and possibly deserved the name; for he contrived to maintain his faith in

Betsy, even after her visit to him on the eve of their wedding, when she told him without a blush that circumstances compelled her to throw him over and marry his scapegrace cousin Jacob.

After that he was more alone than before. Day after day he tended his flock in silence, dumbly asking of wanton Nature, not only why she suffered his sheep to die of damp or drought, of heat or cold, but a new and more personal question,—why she had delivered Betsy into the hands of a man who would starve and beat her, and in time break her heart.

Jacob Thursfield justified his reputation. He set to work at once to beat and starve his wife; and if he could not break her heart, he at least cudgelled her rebellious spirit into submission. While her husband was roystering far and wide over the county, the wretched woman stayed in her wretched home, to do any odds or ends of scantily-paid labour that might keep her from utter starvation. Her many children, with the exception of the eldest boy, died soon after birth; her beauty left her; in a few years she became an old woman, grey-haired and haggard.

During those years, however, William never saw her. Jacob had taken her to live in one of the ruinous hovels that crouch behind the single street of Chipping Olds; and while William never entered the town, Betsy could never leave it. Thus it came to pass that he thought of her still as the merry wench he had courted. The stories of his cousin's behaviour, which were repeated to him at market and fair, seemed to make no impression on his mind. He would shake his head and mutter something inaudible, apparently not realising what was told him; certainly unaware that

he was gaining for himself the titles of close-fisted and mean.

"'E be worse nor 'is namesake, the old Miser of Alberstone," said his friends. "The old un at the Court ain't got no kith nor kin, but them childern o' Betsy Riddle's be William's own cousins, and the old skinflint 'ld see 'em starve afore 'e 'ld put 'is 'and in 'is pocket for 'em."

"Ah! but 'e be a grand judge of a sheep."

"Aye, 'e be that, sure enough."

One July market, however, when the farmers were busy looking out for extra hands for the coming harvest, William Thursfield, sauntering down Marlbury street about midday, saw a hungry woman trying to find a master for a thin overgrown boy of ten or eleven years. William would have looked through and beyond the group, as was his wont, and passed by without seeing it, but that something in the woman's face compelled him to stop. He stared at her for a moment, and turned to a man who stood near him. "Simeon," he said slowly, like a man unused to talking, "who be that? That 'oman, the one tryin' to 'ire out the 'odmedod?"

"Thou don't know, William? Why, that be thy cousin-in-law, Betsy Riddle as was."

"'Er, Betsy Riddle?" he cried. "Then—then where be Jacob?"

"Jacob? 'E be in gaol, William, —four weeks 'ard for poachin' on the Miser's,—Bond Wood it were."

"Ah."

The giver of information hoped for further speech on the subject of Betsy Riddle. He wanted to impress upon William the general view of his conduct in neglecting his relatives, and looked, at least, for a good story to tell afterwards. But William had suddenly become unapproachable. A farmer, to whom the woman spoke, moved away laughing scornfully at

the sickly boy: Betsy turned wearily up the street, searching for someone else to engage him; but Wood William's eyes remained fixed on the spot where she had stood. His friend stared at him in amazement, and left him with a compassionate shake of the head.

Late in the evening the shepherd stood before Jacob Thursfield's cottage in Chipping Olds. In spite of the heat the door was shut, and the window covered with the tattered but opaque remnant of a curtain, a pitiful attempt to guard the secrets of the household from the public eye. The room appeared to be lighted with but one candle; and out into the quiet evening shrilled the voices of a scolding woman and a crying child.

William crossed the road and tapped at the door with his crook. The scolding stopped instantly, and the crying hushed to a murmur of sobs. The door was half-opened, and round it peered the haggard face of Betsy Thursfield. "Thou!" she cried. "What do thou want 'ere?" She stepped out on to the threshold, and pulled the door to behind her.

"Aye," said William, "it be I, Bet. Thou won't ask I to step in?"

"Step in? Likely, bain't it? Step in, so as thou can see what I've a-brought myself to? Step in, so as thou can see the baby dying for want o' food, and reckon up 'ow much of the furniture Jacob 'ave a-left? And then, like enough, read I a lesson on the mistake I made in 'aving 'im 'stead o' thee!"

William stood silent, bewildered between the accustomed vision of his ideal Betsy and the defiant shrew on the doorstep before him. "I seed 'ee at market to-day, Bet," he said at last.

"And I seed thee, William."

"Thou be ageing, my girl."

"Small wonder, be it? Thou be

just the same as ever, William, not a day older."

She knew from his tone that he had not come to reproach or taunt her. Looking into his gentle dreamy face, she thought of what might have been, and the tears came into her eyes and voice.

"I've a-brought 'ee summat, Bet," said William. His hand dived deep under his smock into his unbuttoned pocket, and he held out to her a small bag of money.

"What be that?" she asked sharply.

"Thy man be in trouble, Bet, and can't work for 'ee, and the children be my own kin."

"I won't put finger to un."

"'Tis but a little, Bet."

"May the grass be green over my bones afore I touch a penny of un!"

"But, Bet, my girl——"

"Never, I says! my pride ain't all gone yet, William. I throwed 'ee over for a worser man, but I'll never 'ave it said as I came back to 'ee for 'elp. I'll go on the parish first!"

He understood her feelings, and the knowledge of her determination was a minute drop of happiness in the cup of his misery; for in the ideal Betsy of his imagination that defiant indomitable pluck was one of the chief elements. Words, as usual, failed him. For a moment he and she stood looking into each other's dim eyes; then he turned quickly away. "Likely I sha'n't be seein' 'ee again, Bet."

"'Tis to be 'oped," was the half-sobbed answer. "I can't abide seein' 'ee now, William."

"Good-night to 'ee, then, my girl."

"Good-night, William."

The door slammed and woke the sleeping infant to fresh wailing.

Once only did Wood William see Betsy again in the flesh. Meanwhile, her visible form was quickly replaced

in his mind by the obstinate dream of her which he knew far better. Harvesting came and went; quiet September days were startled by the crack of guns; golden October flashed by like the fall of a cock-pheasant. The ploughmen chaunted to their teams, the cider-presses rolled and rumbled, the folded sheep rushed madly to and fro as the cub-hunters passed in the dewy morning; and still Wood William lived apart from the world, leaning solitary on his crook. Sometimes he consciously sought for a way to help his cousin's wife; sometimes he mused on the wastefulness of Nature, who had ruined Betsy's life much in the same spirit as she had killed off his most promising lambs in the spring, or suffered the rich valley at his feet to be for centuries a bleak, unfruitful marsh. But connected thought was rare with him; for the most part he stood dumb in mind and body, waiting for he knew not what.

About midday of Christmas Eve, as he was making his way across the down, there struck upon his ears the sound of a distant bell. The booming notes, tossed across the valley by the wind in sets of three, were no call to church, for at Alberstone they were proud of their peal of six. Shading his eyes with his hand, he looked out; and there, above the grey woods to the right of the whitewashed tower, he saw something that was no usual part of the view. A flag was flying at Alberstone Court; and even at that distance William could see that it was half-mast high.

The Miser was dead, then! The last of the old family of Thursfield (so people declared him to be, deeming it mere accident that William and his cousin Jacob were Thursfields also,) was gathered to his fathers, and the property, no doubt, would pass to a stranger. And a good thing too,

thought William. That had been more waste; for the broad lands had long lain in the clutch of one who did no good to man or beast, who lived the selfish life of a recluse, while all round him men and women were starving, and the farms going to rack and ruin. Now, no doubt, the place would be bought by some rich man from Bristol, and Alberstone parish would see better days.

Before the new year came William heard the bell tolling for the funeral, and on the next market-day learned that the Miser had left no will. The news did not interest him. He never noticed that he himself was a centre of observation, pointed out by man to man with nods, winks and expressive gestures. Evans, the pettifogging little lawyer, who tried, by means of a big brass plate and unwearied attendance in the Police Court, to push himself into the place in the public confidence held by the older firm of Dawson and Gregg, tracked him up the street, ostensibly to ask his opinion of a hog he thought of buying; but William took no notice of his proffered hand, and answered, with a flash of local wisdom, that a Welshman and a hog were cousins, and he wouldn't interfere in a family matter.

A few days afterward he received a letter from Dawson and Gregg, asking for the favour of an immediate call on business of the utmost importance. It was the time of the birth of the early lambs, and William was busy day and night with the ewes. He had no time to spare to lawyers; and having lighted his pipe with the letter, he thought no more of the subject. But the letter was followed by a second, the second by a third, all pressing the importance of the business; and at last, being obliged to attend the February market, William bethought himself of the lawyers. Finding

their business to hand, he picked his way through the pushing, lowing herds of cattle, that, guarded by small urchins with long sticks, stood prisoned against the very walls of the houses on that side of the market-place. His left hand stroked the nose of a terrified cow, as he knocked with his right at the door of Messrs. Dawson and Gregg's office.

The office-boy saluted him with the graceful sweep of the arm that has given way in less homely places to the curt touching of the forehead; a clerk who was running down the stairs shook his hand and called him "Mr. Thursfield;" and the five or six young men who sat behind the wooden rail in the outer office contended for the honour of bringing him a chair and *THE TIMES*, of hanging in the hall his hat and crook, and hoping that the cold weather did not affect his health. Half-shy and half-contemptuous, the old shepherd looked from one to the other, wondering vaguely why Wood William, the common butt of their humour, had suddenly become Mr. Thursfield, the object of attentive deference.

All was explained when, after a few moments' waiting, he was shown into the senior partner's room. The grey-bearded, fussy little man rose to shake him by the hand; and then, after much hemming and hawing and aimless turning over of documents, came the great announcement.

"Our Mr. Gregg," said the senior partner, "has been investigating the Thursfield pedigree, and has collected, with the exception of one trifling fact, all the evidence necessary to prove that you are the heir to the Alberstone Court property, the late owner of which died intestate and a bachelor." Wood William gasped. "I wish you had been able to call upon us a little sooner, for there is another claimant, for whom—er—we do not act, Jacob

Thursfield, whom I understand to be your first cousin, that is, the son of your father's younger brother. His solicitor, Mr. Evans, has been very busy since Christmas, and we anticipate some little opposition to our view. The property has been sadly neglected, and is heavily encumbered. The late owner, far from being a miser, was a man of most extravagant tastes. But we calculate that the income is sufficient to yield some five or six hundred a year, after paying the mortgage interests."

"And it be mine?"

"Absolutely, if the single piece of evidence we want you to give us turns out satisfactory."

"And if not mine, whose then?"

"Presumably your cousin Jacob's."

William rose from his chair and looked out upon the surging, swaying mob of cattle, the shouting men and screaming children. An idea had suddenly flashed into his mind, and his decision was taken with startling rapidity. He turned and spoke: "Let Jacob 'ave un, then."

"What?" cried the lawyer in amazement.

"Let Jacob 'ave un, I says."

"But, my dear sir, it isn't mine to give to whom I please; it's purely a question of law. If you are the heir, the legal estate is vested in you, whether you will or no."

Brought suddenly face to face with a new and astounding creature, a man who actually did not want a good property, the lawyer was bewildered. He stammered and stuttered, and was on the point of launching forth into further argument, when a clerk tapped at the door. "Mr. Jacob Thursfield to see you, sir."

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Dawson, more bewildered than ever. He would have refused to see the man, had not Jacob already shouldered his way into the room. "Ello, William,"

he cried with offensive jocularity, and the whole room was filled with the smell of spirits and tobacco. "I've a-caught 'ee at un, 'ave I? Evans, 'e told I not to speak to old Dawson 'ere, nor Gregg, on no account. But I seed 'ee slink in 'ere, and made up my mind to come in and tell 'ee as it bain't no good. That there property be mine."

"Sir, this is an unwarrantable intrusion!" cried Mr. Dawson, but Jacob cut him short. "'Old your tongue, old ram! I do know well enough what you and William be shut up 'ere together for; and I tell 'ee it bain't no good. My father were the elder brother, not William's."

"What?" cried the lawyer. "That's the very point at issue. What proof have you of your statement?"

"Proof? Ask Evans; 'e do know; 'e've a-got 'eaps o' proof. There be two old 'omen at least as be ready to swear to un."

"Tsh!" said Mr. Dawson impatiently; and turning to William he went on. "It is an unfortunate fact, Mr. Thursfield, that the parish registers of Chipping Olds, which alone could prove the point we want, were destroyed by fire in 1837. But I shall want a good deal more evidence than the statement of your cousin or his two old women. Now, have you no records, no documents of any kind, to support your claim?"

Wood William looked to the floor, to the fireplace, to the ceiling, finally at Mr. Dawson. He had opened his lips, as if about to speak, when Jacob burst forth again. "Not 'e! Look at un! my father were the older, and there be no sayin' nay to that."

William rose slowly from his chair, and moved towards the door. "Jacob be right," said he, with his fingers on the handle.

Jacob stared incredulous. Great as was his belief in the power of impu-

dence, he had never expected so easy a victory.

"Mr. Thursfield," cried the lawyer, but too late. William had left the room, taken down his hat and crook from the peg in the hall, and turned away up the street; and the clerk who was sent after him reported that he would not return.

He went straight back to his old spot on the down, and leaning on his crook looked across towards Alberstone. The vague thoughts that drifted through his mind summed themselves at last in a feeling which translated into the language of a conscious thinker, would be a half-hearted apology for having lost sight of what is good in the power that rules men's lives. There might be much waste, much cruelty, in Nature; but he could not think her wholly bad, when she had put into his hands so great a chance of doing good to poor Betsy. It had all been very easy, very simple. A word had made a rich man of his cousin, a rich woman (as he thought) of his cousin's wife; and thus the difficulty of Betsy's pride was overcome. She would never know the truth about the Alberstone inheritance.

When evening fell, he trudged slowly home, and took down from its shelf his great family Bible. There, entered on the fly-leaf by some long-dead Rector of Chipping Olds, were particulars of the marriage of William Thursfield and Anne Symes in 1798, of the birth of William Thursfield in 1800, followed by that of Eli Thursfield, the father of Jacob, in 1803. Their nameless mounds lay near the great yew-tree in Chipping Olds' churchyard. Wood William, then more nobly *wood* than ever, tore the leaf carefully from the book, and pushed it in among the embers of the fire. When the flame of the burning paper had died down,

he smiled. "There, Bet!" he murmured. "It be thine for good and all, then, now."

Of all that went on in Marlbury during the next few days he knew nothing. Dawson and Gregg remonstrated with Evans, Evans insulted Dawson and Gregg; two old women made statutory declarations before Evans, and were compensated with "travelling-expenses" at £5 each for any fear of the law of perjury. The story of William's submission leaked out. His name was tossed from mouth to mouth; he was sealed as wilfully and incurably *wood*, without the pluck to make a fair fight for his claim. But he dwelt alone upon the heights, and heard none of it. Three letters came from Dawson and Gregg: William burned them all; and the firm gave him up in disgust. Jacob entered upon the possession, and Evans upon the management, of the Alberstone property; and far away upon the opposite heights William's heart swelled daily with joy that a good deed had been done.

Jacob soon transformed himself into his own notion of a fine gentleman. His stables were full of horses, and his house of strange guests. He drank, rioted, and gambled from Bristol to Gloucester; and no one heard a word of his wife and only child. The farms fell into greater decay; the tenants left one by one, and the misery of Alberstone parish was doubled. Meanwhile, little Evans was at work. All the mortgages were transferred to his name, and his hold upon the property grew stronger year by year. More and more loans (with ever-rising rates of interest) were necessary to keep pace with Jacob's extravagance; and when, at last, Evans heard that his client had been trying to borrow money of a Bristol solicitor, he thought it time to strike.



All through the three terrible years of Jacob's downfall, Wood William on his distant downs had watched the smoke from the chimneys and the gaudy flag that floated day after day on the tower, and had smiled often to himself, thinking that now, at last, Betsy was happy in the enjoyment of wealth and comfort. No one took the trouble to enlighten him; he lived in his fool's paradise undisturbed.

One morning, however, he saw that no flag was run up on the tower of the Court, no smoke came from the chimneys. Jacob and Betsy were on a visit, no doubt; at the sea-side, perhaps at Aust, or even the New Passage, like rich Bristol folks. They would have taken Tom with them, of course; he must be quite a big lad by now. Poor Betsy! Life would have gone hard with her, but for the Miser's money.

An urchin came whistling across the downs, and handed William a scrap of paper.

"What be this, boy?" he asked. "And who sent 'ee with un?"

"Sent from Alberstone Court with un. You be wanted, Mr. Thursfield."

William opened the note, and looked at it. "Read un out, boy," he said. "I can't see without my glasses."

The urchin read in a loud sing-song voice: "Come and see me to-day. Jacob's gone, and I'm near dead. Betsy."

"Betsy, — Jacob, — near dead, — Jacob gone, does she say? Where be Jacob gone, boy?"

"Done a guy," said the urchin.

"Speak up, boy; I can't 'ear 'ee," said William, not catching the new slang-phrase.

"'E've a-runned away," roared the boy. "Spent all 'is money, and took 'isself off; no one don't know where to."

"And what about Betsy? What about Betsy?"

"Don't know."

William hurried away. The exertion of rapid walking, and his determination not to see, prevented his realising the total failure of his cherished scheme. He was all the more shocked, therefore, on reaching Alberstone Court, after an hour's battle against wind and mud, to see reposing in the hall the portly figure of the local bailiff.

"What, thou, George Gayner!" he cried; and his solemn voice rang hollow round the black panelled walls.

"Aye, William. Sent here by little Evans," said the bailiff, putting a fresh spill to his pipe. "Jacob's 'ooked it."

"And Betsy? Where be Betsy and the boy?"

"Boy, William, what boy?"

William stared blankly in response, and the bailiff turned away with a muttered *Wood!* "Betsy, then!" rang the shepherd's voice, now timid and querulous. "Where be my Betsy?"

"Up-stairs, William. My old 'oman 'ave just gone to get 'er a sup o' broth,—not but what 'er be too far gone to take un."

The shepherd stumbled up the broad Italian staircase, and entered the first room he found in the gallery. There, upon a great old four-post bedstead, lay Betsy Thursfield. She turned a wan and pain-racked face towards him. "William!" she moaned. "Thank 'eaven thou be come!"

"All alone, Bet?" he cried, still haunted with the idea that she was rich. "Where be thy servants, then?"

"Gone, William, gone with the rest of un all! There's been nothing but going for the last two year. First of all, 'twere my boy as died, just as I'd a-got fondest of un. Since

then I ain't noticed much, but one by one things 'ave been going, the 'orses, the servants, the money, and now Jacob 'isself. I've been lonesome, William, sad and lonesome ever since my boy died."

"But thou've a-been 'appy, Bet? Tell us thou've a-been 'appy!"

The dying woman looked round the faded luxury of the great room and sighed. "So long as there were money, I 'ad plenty; 'e didn't stint I o' that. But I've 'ad no love, William, no comfort nor kind words since my boy died." He fell on his knees at her bedside, with bowed shoulders and trembling lips. Taking her hands in his, he tried to chafe them back to warmth. "I were a foolish wench, William, though none so bad as folks did say. I throwed 'ee over for a worser man, and I've a-paid for un. We all of us 'as to pay, but mine was a cruel long price."

"What about I, then?" cried the old shepherd, stung into open revolt by failure. "What 'ave I done to pay for? I done all for the best, and this be what comes of un!"

But there was no time then for

questioning Fate or Nature. All his life afterwards he bore the air of a man listening for an answer that never came; but that moment was not one for thought. Betsy was sinking rapidly. She died quietly in his arms about half an hour after he had entered the room.

Wood William laid her reverently back, and closed her eyes. Her poor pinched face was smiling, as if she were glad that her debt, at last, was paid. But William stood erect, and with outstretched arms hurled his indictment against Nature. "Waste, waste!" he cried. "She and I and the money wasted! All waste!"

He lived for many years after Betsy's death. Day after day he would stand upon the open down, erect and motionless, like a monument to his own dead dreams, with his mind lost, for the most part, in a cheerful abstraction. But now and then, as he caught sight of the smoke from the chimneys of Alberstone Court, the country-seat of a Bristol draper, his old eyes would be troubled, and his snowy head shake sadly.

HAROLD CHILD.

## THE OUTLOOK IN FRANCE.

Now that the intensity of feeling caused by the reconviction of Alfred Dreyfus has been largely relieved by the knowledge that he is once more a free, though not a rehabilitated man, we may attempt to read the bearings of this remarkable case upon the political condition of France with some approach to judicial calmness. In the heat of a righteous indignation against the crimes of a few individuals, the English Press has in too many instances entered upon a scathing and unmitigated condemnation of the entire French nation, and has run the risk of copying that very violence of language which it deplored in the newspapers of France. Journalists have been too ready to forget that if the Republic has its Henrys and its Beaurepaires, it has also its Picquarts, Freystätters, Laboris, and Sheurer-Kestners, and that if Sodom was to be spared for the sake of five righteous men, France might still be held not unworthy of honour for the sake of such men as these. Deplorable, no doubt, was the attitude of open hostility or absolute indifference to the claims of justice of the majority of Frenchmen; but hardly less deplorable for a different reason was the tone of the foreign Press, which cannot have failed to militate against the cause which it was honestly but mistakenly intended to serve. Much as we have talked during the last few months of the impossibility of a Dreyfus-case occurring in this country, one cannot feel sure that if Englishmen had been hectored and lectured by the papers of other countries as Frenchmen have been by our papers,

a miscarriage of justice might not have resulted out of a spirit of sheer defiance. One may hope that it would not have been so; one may believe that a body of British officers, placed in the position of the Rennes Court-Martial, would be sufficiently courageous and enlightened to put aside all considerations except those of justice, and to bring in a verdict undisturbed by political and other extraneous considerations. Nevertheless, to be told beforehand what verdict must be given upon evidence not yet adduced, and to be threatened, on the one side with loss of promotion and the scorn of the majority of your countrymen, and on the other with the undying reprobation of the generations to come, might well flutter the nerves of a stronger moralist than the average French officer, or indeed than the average man in any country under the sun. However that may be, it can hardly be questioned that the heated language of the papers outside France made Dreyfus's reconviction more rather than less probable, by irritating the Nationalist Press, and breeding a determination to show the foreigner that Frenchmen are not to be dictated to in the management of their domestic affairs.

That the verdict of the Court Martial was wrong in point of fact is probably true. At the same time, the impartial critic is constrained to admit that there was evidence sufficient to form the basis of an accusation against Dreyfus. He had, it appears, been in the habit of visiting Alsace without a passport at a time when, to the knowledge of his judges,

the passport regulations were exceedingly strict, and the fact that M. Demange (no doubt by an oversight) made no reference to this point in his speech for the defence is said to have had considerable weight with the Court. There was also the evidence heard with closed doors, which, although everything points to its entire unimportance as making for Dreyfus's treason, may, for anything we definitely know, have influenced the minds of the judges. One would, therefore, prefer to ascribe the miscarriage of justice to the faults of a system rather than to the infamy of the judges or to the conscious wickedness of the witnesses for the prosecution. The generals long ago convinced themselves of Dreyfus's guilt, and, like men convinced all the world over, passed lightly over evidence which told against their conviction. They knew it to be a matter of difficulty to obtain in cases of treason evidence which would appear satisfactory to the ordinary man in ordinary circumstances, and were in consequence content to rest their decision upon a groundwork of the most trivial facts, assisted by the widest of presumptions, which in a civil court would have been deemed totally insufficient to establish the guilt of the accused. They were prepared to commit certain illegalities in what they considered to be the interests of the Service, but one may still believe that General Mercier was sincere when he said at Rennes that if he had seen cause to alter his opinion as to the prisoner's guilt since 1894 he would acknowledge his mistake, but that he remained as convinced of Dreyfus's treason in 1899 as he had been five years previously. It is, on the whole, more probable that the generals were men of mediocre intelligence than that they deliberately conspired to defeat the ends of justice out of personal spite towards a

Jew, or from fear of the consequences of past mistakes and irregularities. In the temper of the majority of Frenchmen General Mercier was unlikely to suffer severe punishment for the communication of secret documents to the Court-Martial of 1894, or for the irregularities he had committed since that date; and the errors of the other officers were insignificant by comparison and unlikely to be punished at all.

This view may strike the reader as too favourable to the witnesses for the prosecution, but it seems to afford a loophole for escape from the dilemma in which we are placed by Mr. G. W. Stevens who was present at the trial and heard the whole of the evidence. In *THE TRAGEDY OF DREYFUS* he thus contrasts Colonel Picquart on the one hand, with Major Lauth and Captain Junck, also Alsatians though bitter opponents of Dreyfus, on the other :

It was the most curious problem in life, and the most baffling. Here were the three Alsatians, Picquart, Lauth, and Junck, all equally positive, all equally lucid, all equally convincing; and either the first or the other two must be deliberately and elaborately lying. Only which? Of course the anti-Dreyfusards said Picquart, and the Dreyfusards said Lauth and Junck. But for the man who merely wanted to find out the truth it was blankly hopeless. True, there were two of Lauth and Junck against one of Picquart; on the other hand, it would probably pay twice as well to be on Lauth's and Junck's side as it would to be on Picquart's. If Picquart or Junck be false, and one or other must be, what do you think of men who face their fellows on the most important issue of France's recent history, and in plain, temperate, carefully selected language, without a hesitation, a slip, a discrepancy, a second of confusion, lie steadily for hours? If Lauth be false, what of a man,—it constantly happened in the subsequent days—who at every turn of the case, at every crisis, when Labori was flashing his searchlight, when the witness was silent and the judges were suspicious, and the generals lost their heads,—who flung up

his hand with "I ask to be heard," and, standing up on the platform, told, in simple, unaffected language, the right lie in the right place. You could never put him down, you could never take him wrong. Cool, ready, resolute, if Major Lauth was lying he is the master-liar of the world; and if he is not, Picquart is.

Well, I suppose we shall all see through the Dreyfus-case on the Day of Judgment; meanwhile I, for one, give it up.

Yet Mr. Steevens was originally predisposed in the accused's favour: "I came to Rennes firmly believing Dreyfus innocent; now I no longer knew what I believed."

The hypothesis that the witnesses for the prosecution were honest but stupid does not, it must be admitted, allow for the exaggerated idea of what is due to discipline which prevails with the majority of French officers, and which, it has been suggested, was the cause of a vast amount of deliberate untruthfulness during the proceedings. Colonel Maurel has shown us that prevarication is deemed a light offence when its object is to uphold the principle that the chiefs of the French Army can do no wrong, and Mr. Decle in his recent work has drawn an instructive picture of the relative values of obedience and justice in the eyes of a French colonel.

"Sir," I began, "I have been punished." "Punished," he exclaimed, "yes, you are always being punished, you are the worst trooper in my regiment. We don't want men like you in the French Army. What do you want?" "Sir," I once more began, "I have been punished by Corporal —" "I know it," he replied, waxing quite angry, "I told you so before; you are always punished,—always punished. If it is to tell me that that you have come, you might have stopped at the barracks. Why the deuce don't you tell me what you want? Do you think I am standing here at your orders?" "If you will allow me to explain, sir," I replied, "I will tell you how and why I have been punished." "I don't want to know anything about it," said the Colonel in an angry voice.

"Let me see, how many days have you got?" Twenty days, sir," I said. "Have you finished your punishment?" "No, sir, I have only done two days so far." "And you dare to come and complain to me! But I ought not to be astonished,—for cool cheek and impudence you haven't your equal. Go back to barracks and tell the Adjutant to put you down ten days more for having made an unjustified complaint. That's all—look sharp."<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of Captain Frey-stätter, after being confronted with General Mercier, and the respect shown for the memory of Colonel Henry, in spite of his clumsy forgeries, prove that truthfulness and manliness are regarded as defects rather than virtues when they are likely to detract from the authority of the Jugernaut Discipline. That the discipline of the French Army has its advantages is evident from the ease with which General de Galliffet has been enabled to remove from their posts such men as Generals de Negrier and Zurlinden, in spite of the very strong current of military and popular opinion in their favour. Discipline, moreover, requires to be maintained with a stricter hand among the conscript and heterogeneous elements that compose the French forces than in a voluntary and homogeneous army like that of Great Britain. Nevertheless, when it is employed to stifle the manhood and moral sense of those who are subject to it, it cannot in the end fail to injure the nation whose bulwark of security it is intended to be; and it is to be hoped in the interests of France that future Ministers of War will be jealously watchful to prevent the zeal of senior officers from pushing reverence for discipline beyond its legitimate confines. Granting, however, that the spirit of obedience to the orders of a superior is in

<sup>1</sup> TROOPER 3,809: a Private Soldier of the Third Republic; by Lionel Decle. London, 1899.

France at present carried to an extent which is, or at any rate is likely to be subversive of the moral law, it is difficult to believe that there could have been such apparent unanimity of conviction among the witnesses for the prosecution (many of them, be it remembered, civilians) without a genuine belief (founded, no doubt, on insufficient facts and premises, but still genuine), that they had right on their side. M. Bertillon was unquestionably convinced by his own abstruse theories, which it was probably given to no one but himself to understand, and it is not difficult to conceive that their very unintelligibility may have conduced to the conviction of others, who were only too ready to follow the miscalled patriotic course, if they could see their way to do so without too glaring a violation of their consciences.

French ideas of discipline may be decidedly injurious according to our ideas, but it would not be fair to ascribe the reconviction of Dreyfus solely to their evil influence. They are the outcome partly of national characteristics, and partly of the geographical and political position of France; and the importance of implicit obedience in the eyes of a French general cannot be easily estimated by an Englishman. Great allowance must be made for the chiefs of the French army in judging of their efforts to maintain discipline and put down treasonable practices. They have ever-present in their minds the disasters of the war of 1870, begetting a state of nervousness and suspicion which must be almost impossible for us to realise in the safety of our island-home, with only one serious attempt at invasion in the last eight hundred years. The invasion of France by the Germans would be a matter of incomparably greater difficulty to-day than it was at the out-

break of the Franco-Prussian War; but those who are responsible for the safety of a country to which the horrors of invasion are still a memory of yesterday, may be excused, if any men may, for deeming it expedient to sacrifice an individual here and there on the slenderest of evidence to prevent the machine, which has been erected at such a vast expenditure of brains and money, from finding its wheels clogged on the outbreak of hostilities by treachery. In this country we can afford to treat with derision the mania which marks the military authorities in France for seeing a spy in every passing tourist with a kodak; but the trial has shown that Frenchmen cannot afford to treat the matter so lightly, since their country is surrounded by a network of espionage which naturally renders those in authority apt to be quickly suspicious of treason, and, where the conduct of an individual affords the slightest ground for unfavourable comment, not too careful to weigh out justice with exactitude. It is, in short, the time-honoured principle of expediency demanding that an innocent man shall occasionally suffer that the people may live.

What, then, of the members of the Court-Martial? Are they to be white-washed too? I think it must be so, now that we are quit of the heat of passion and can regard the matter from the soothing distance of a few weeks past. It is probable that the members of that body came to their duties with the desire to do right, hoping possibly that the path of duty would coincide with the course which would win popularity, but still with minds to which the result of the trial was not a foregone conclusion. There may have been, probably there was, a bias against the prisoner on the part of the majority. It could scarcely be otherwise, seeing that the feeling of



the army generally was firm in support of its chiefs. Still, had the evidence of Dreyfus's innocence been absolutely clear,—it is true that it was for the prosecution to conclusively prove his guilt, but persons without legal qualifications would not be likely to take account of such details as that,—had, for instance, the experts been unanimous in Dreyfus's favour, and the evidence of General Roget, with its magnificent assumptions upon the most meagre of foundations, been not forthcoming, it is well within the bounds of possibility that there would have been an acquittal. The members of the Court would certainly have been pleased to find finality on one side or the other; better pleased, no doubt, to find it on the side of the generals than on the side of Dreyfus, but still glad to be left without hesitation or doubt. They found it on neither side. Instead, they found themselves involved in a huge mass of evidence, a great part of it of a most complicated character which might well have appalled a trained lawyer. Much of it was totally irrelevant; still more of it was such as could not have been introduced in the courts of this country, although perfectly admissible in the French courts, and the judges at Rennes must have been reduced to a state of mental chaos by the conflicting opinions and testimony put before them. What, then, was more natural than that, finding that they were personally incapable of winnowing the wheat from the chaff, they should trust to the guidance of the five ex-Ministers of War whose conviction of the prisoner's guilt was pressed upon them with so much fervour? It has been vehemently asserted that the rider of extenuating circumstances was illogical and was a mere attempt to salve guilty consciences; but it is at least possible

that it was the result of a compromise (compromises are always illogical) between two opposite opinions, or that, as has been stated, Colonel Jouast was one of the minority and, as president of the tribunal, had sufficient authority to insist upon the insertion in the verdict of the obviously inconsistent clause. Considering the matter dispassionately there is, perhaps, more cause for wonder that the verdict was not unanimous than that the prisoner was reconvicted.

Captain Dreyfus was the martyr of the faulty system which sends cases of immense intricacy for the decision of men wholly untrained in the sifting of evidence, without any such check as exists in this country in the supervision of the sentences of courts-martial by the Judge-Advocate-General. But it must not be supposed that, because there has been a miscarriage of justice in quite exceptional circumstances, the legal system of France is essentially bad. The very possibility of revision after the sentence had once been passed speaks volumes for the sense of justice cherished by a considerable and influential portion of the French people. That revision, let us remember, could never have been brought about by foreign opinion and foreign journals alone; it was due almost entirely to the moral courage of MM. Sheurer-Kestner, Picquart, and Zola; let us remember, too, the demeanour of the Court of Cassation amid all the revilings and hysterical outcries of the scum of the French Press, and we must in fairness admit that the allegations as to justice being dead in that country, of which we have lately heard a good deal, were grave exaggerations due to the tension produced by the extraordinarily dramatic incidents of the case. If the condemnation had taken place in

Germany or Russia, the victim would in all probability still be languishing in a hopeless captivity; and the fact that the French Government has been strong enough to attempt a policy of appeasement by pardoning Dreyfus is evidence that the Republic is not so unstable as its detractors would have us believe. That the functionaries in the lower ranks of the French judicial service are prone to bow too much to political considerations is no doubt as true as it is deplorable, but that state of things is likely to continue so long as advancement depends largely upon the good offices of the Deputies and their political managers. In the higher ranks of the service, however, where promotion is not looked for and salaries are fairly adequate according to the general run of French incomes, the administration of justice is probably as efficient as in this country, for we may safely assume that a M. Quesnay de Beaurepaire does not rise to the Court of Cassation once in a century, and that his influence when there is not very great.

There is one regrettable feature of French life with which this case has familiarised us, and that is the scurrility of a large portion of the French Press. However leniently we may judge the army and its methods, there can be nothing but the sincerest abhorrence and contempt for the Judets, Drumonts, and Rocheforts of Parisian journalism. The classic reference by the last named to the members of the Court of Cassation is probably fresh in the mind of the reader, and it is a typical example of the tone adopted by a large proportion of French journalists towards public men whose opinions happen to differ from their own. They habitually employ language which in any other country would be considered the climax of chauvinism, recklessly dis-

regarding accuracy so long as they can imbue the minds of their readers with their particular views. It cannot be healthful for France that her statesmen, judges, and other public officials should daily be held up to the ridicule or contempt of the populace in language that is calculated to arouse the worst passions of human nature; but the fact that every political party has at its service organs given to the use of the most immoderate language forbids the hope that any Government will in the near future be able to eradicate this canker from the public life of France. In the present instance, royalist, clerical, and anti-semitic papers have vied with each other to defeat revision, totally ignoring the claims of right and justice. When the Brisson Ministry decided to send the case to the Court of Cassation, they were met with a virulence of abuse which ultimately brought about their downfall. It was not that the guilt of the prisoner was believed in, for the amount of evidence at that time before the public was very small, but for the clerical and anti-semitic papers it was enough that Dreyfus was a Jew, while by clerical, royalist, and anti-semitic journals alike the case was used as a stick to beat an unpopular Administration. The language applied to the members of the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation was of a kind which would have been inappropriate and indecent if used of a convicted felon. General de Gallifet, once the idol of the royalist Press, became, on taking office, the most abused man in France. The readers of the papers hostile to Captain Dreyfus were permitted to see no evidence or comments which could by any possibility tell in his favour. Thus the most widely circulating and influential journals in France,—the *clientèle* of the *TEMPS*, *JOURNAL DES*

DEBATS, and FIGARO, honourable exceptions to the general rule, is comparatively small—have deliberately ignored the most important function of a national Press, to enlighten the public as to what concerns its well-being truthfully and temperately, and without apparent qualms of conscience have reversed that initial duty by deceiving their readers and doing their utmost to arouse rancour and hatred. They have grossly misused their opportunities for doing good, and the best that can be hoped for the country which they victimise is that it will one day have the strength of mind to place restrictions upon the licence which they have mistaken for liberty. Until that day comes it is to be expected that many of the most upright and able of the citizens of France will hold aloof from public life, preferring to devote their energies to pursuits which will not render their private affairs the subject of systematic vivisection.

With the single exception of newspaper violence, however, there does not appear to be any symptom of disease seriously threatening a vital spot in the body politic of France. Nations, and particularly the Latin nations, have a habit of displaying unsuspected powers of recuperation, and it is quite possible that France will yet surprise the candid friends who prophesy her approaching dissolution by throwing off the effects of various recent scandals, just as she astonished Europe by the ease with which she discharged the enormous indemnity in which she was bound to Germany after the Prussian War. It may be doubted whether the militarism prevalent in the Republic is the burden which we are accustomed to assume. To our modes of thought, and with our peculiar traditions of freedom, the irksomeness of the conditions of life which the Frenchman cheerfully bears

would be immense; but our modes of thought are not those of the French, our traditions are entirely different, and the national characters of the two people altogether distinct. The militarism of France is probably not so great as that of Germany, and it is the price which the people must pay for the insurance of their existence as a nation. The army is not, as some imagine, constantly plotting to overthrow the Republic, because conscription incorporates in the ranks of the army elements which are directly favourable to the maintenance of republicanism, and therefore on the form of government the army is divided against itself. No doubt, a majority of military men, and particularly of the officers, would prefer a Monarchy or an Empire to a Republic, since the republicanism of modern France is of that *bourgeois* type to which the military spirit is naturally in opposition, regarding, as it does, trade-prospects as of far higher importance than the achievement of military successes, which may be barren of commercial advantages and will certainly be fruitful of increased taxation. But however much the military element in France may despise the commercial spirit, they are not willing to risk a war with a first-class European Power if they can honourably avoid it. The wish to recover the provinces yielded to Germany by the Treaty of Frankfurt is still deeply imbedded in the heart of every French soldier; but, to judge by numbers alone, the issue of hostilities between the two countries would to-day be too problematical for a Frenchman to enter upon them with a light heart, while French generals may have knowledge which leads them to suspect that in the matters of physique and discipline the French soldier is by no means the equal of his German rival, and perhaps inwardly to recog-

nise, however unwillingly, that the ability of the respective commanders would be by no means equally matched. It is not the senior officers of an army who desire war, but the younger men to whom fighting brings the chance of quick promotion, and with whom responsibility does not rest in case of defeat. The former recognise too clearly the possibilities of failure even where the prospects of success appear most assured, and the suspicion, of which a certain class of civilians cannot rid themselves, that soldiers, as a body, are consumed by an inordinate and bloodthirsty ambition is, if we may believe our own Commander-in-Chief, altogether inapplicable to the circumstances of to-day. The chiefs of the French army are not exceptional in this respect; they have little to gain by a war, and a great deal to lose, and they are not likely to risk the safety of the country and their own reputations in order to gain that little. Their distaste for the present form of government is, therefore, rather latent than active, and so long as the Republic allows them a fairly free hand in the management of their particular domain, it is highly improbable that any of the responsible military officials will make a serious attempt to subvert it.

The Republic, indeed, is more firmly established than the brevity of the lives of its Ministries might lead the casual observer to suppose. Ministerial instability is due to the adoption of parliamentarianism by a country to which that form of government is unsuited. Even in our own country, where representative government is a matter on which we specially pride ourselves, it may be doubted whether the palmy days of the institution are not behind us, since parties have an increasing tendency to split up into a number of cliques, each with its special objects

to gain, occasionally at the sacrifice of the dominating party interests. This subdivision of parties is yearly rendering the conduct of the country's business more difficult for British governments, and it has for years past made it well-nigh an impossible task for the governments of France. In that country the detriment to the national interests occasioned by the adoption of an unsuitable system is felt not only in its foreign relations, where the quick changes of ministry must necessarily render the conduct of negotiations with other Powers a matter of more than ordinary difficulty, but is also apparent in its economic condition. On the economic aspect of the parliamentary system in France Mr. Bodley has some hard words to say in his recent work. It leads, he assures us, to waste directly and indirectly: directly, by multiplying to an entirely unnecessary extent official posts and, therefore, the cost of government; indirectly, by making it the ambition of every educated youth to secure one of these posts, and thereby diverting his attention and efforts from the commercial ventures which can alone replenish the resources of his country.

The tendency of representative government is, therefore, to effect not economy, but the multiplication of State-paid offices, ruining the finances of the country, and turning the industrious French people into a nation of needy place-hunters. Under previous parliamentary regimes this evil was not patent, as the electorate was extremely limited, and if every voter in France had been given a post under Louis Philippe the bureaucracy would not have been unduly swollen. Whereas with ten million constituents encouraged to regard their members in this light, the rich resources of the land are strained, and citizens are taken away from callings which increase the national riches, are deterred from colonial enterprise, and are generally diverted from ambitious pur-

sv  
n  
F  
fi  
in  
in  
of  
G  
th  
g  
th  
vi  
th  
ab  
co  
of  
th  
fo  
po  
T  
or  
in  
Fr  
th  
th  
ov  
ai  
fa  
Fr  
su  
th  
in  
co  
th  
gr  
en  
ti  
Br  
in  
Fr  
so  
as  
mi  
ti  
in  
Go  
n  
duc  
189

suits which elevate the standard of a nation.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, under the Republic France has not prospered either financially or (which is, no doubt, in part the effect of faulty finance) in the acquisition and administration of colonies. The difference between Great Britain and the Republic in the latter respect is pretty accurately gauged by the difference in cost to the Home Government of each individual colonist. To Great Britain the cost is about twopence, to France about twenty shillings. The French colonies are occupied mainly by the official class, and they chiefly serve the purpose of creating official posts for the employment of the friends of politicians in the mother country. Those persons, whom a more than ordinarily venturesome spirit does induce to try their fortunes in the French possessions over-sea, find the cost of living exorbitantly high owing to the protective system which aims at handicapping foreign manufactures; and the total result of French colonial enterprise is annually subjected to scathing comment by the reporter of the French Budget in the Chamber of Deputies, as he compares the immoderate bill which the Republic has to pay for the gratification of the desire to see her empire expanding, with the comparatively small cost at which Great Britain and Germany satisfy a similar inclination.

But the financial strain to which France is being subjected is, if not so superficially apparent, at any rate as severe in home as in colonial administration. That spirit of collectivism, which seems to be inherent in the French character, drives the Government to undertake a variety

of industrial enterprises, regardless of the question whether they will prove remunerative. A neighbourhood where a railway will not pay cries out for a railway; the Government accordingly builds it, and the cost of construction and the loss upon working are defrayed from the taxes. In consequence the taxes fall so heavily upon the wealth-producing industries that many of them find it impossible to exist. The Omnibus Company of Paris is a signal instance; it was taxed to more than double the amount of its dividends, and thus came under the control of the State, which is, presumably, now carrying it on at a loss. This reckless expenditure on public works, with the increasing cost of the military and naval services, leaves the country no opportunity for recuperating from such drains upon her financial powers as the war-indemnity of 1871, the waste of capital incurred in connection with the Panama Canal, and the ravages of the phylloxera. Her public debt is the largest in Europe, absorbing  $36\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the national revenue, and there is not the slightest prospect of any reduction being attempted in the near future. Add to this an ominous sluggishness as regards population, which, however satisfactory it may be from the point of view of those who see a grave national danger in the inability of a country to produce sufficient food-stuffs to support its people, must yet, as things now stand, place France at a disadvantage by the side of so rapidly growing a neighbour as Germany,—and you have a situation to cope with which successfully will require a stronger Ministry than any that have governed France in recent years, or seem likely to govern her during the next decade.

For that, however, the republican form of government is only distantly responsible. That form may have

<sup>1</sup> FRANCE; by J. E. C. Bodley. Introduction, p. 26; revised edition, London, 1899.



deterred some able men from entering the public service, and may consequently have lowered the tone of parliament and public life generally by leaving the conduct of the country's affairs in the hands of professional and not always very single-minded politicians ; but reluctance to assume the burden of political life may, perhaps, be more accurately ascribed to a distaste for risking the loss of a reputation in the troubled vortex into which the parliamentary system has resolved itself in France, than to any very active dislike of the existing government. The country is republican at heart, and fears a monarchical reaction, although it would probably approve of some more showy figure-head than the Third Republic makes of its president. However that may be, it is probable that the Republic is as likely to stand as either of the other forms of government with which the French have been recently threatened ; and while the former continues to exist we may feel assured that the French Government will avoid hostilities so long as that course is possible, in spite of the disposition, of which the political prophets have been warning us during the past months, to drown in a foreign war the sense of humiliation from which it is rather rashly assumed that France must be suffering. It might be that if Russia were willing to take an active part in hostilities, a Republican Government would be willing to try conclusions with this country ; but Russia has enough to engage her attention for

the present in the consolidation of her Eastern empire, and will certainly not run the risk of indefinitely delaying the accomplishment of her designs in Siberia and Manchuria for the mere aggrandisement of her rather unstable ally. Even were Russia more ready to join in a contest with a first-class Power than she is at present, a Republican Government would hesitate long before embarking on war. An unsuccessful war would certainly lead to the overthrow of the present rule at the hands of an angry populace, while a successful one might very well place the general in command of the French forces in a position to acclaim a dictatorship without the possibility of resistance. Therefore, both for political reasons, and from the horror with which the chance of invasion is regarded by the class from which the Ministries of the Republic are mainly recruited, a breach of the peace by our volatile neighbour is by no means probable. Still, she and we have many pretty causes of quarrel in many corners of the earth, and the settlement of them is not likely to become the easier for language which, however well meant, is in truth the language of exaggeration. Let us by all means speak out against the perpetration of injustice and inhumanity, but let us withal remember, as we cast the stone of denunciation, that we have not ourselves been without sin in such matters in the past, and that we may have need of a charitable judgment in the future.

SPENCER BRODHURST.



## A MODERN MONASTERY AND AN ANCIENT RUIN.

GREEK monasteries have always played a prominent, and a somewhat uneccelesiastical part in the life of the country. Formerly, under Turkish rule, the spirit of Hellenic independence was naturally fostered by monkish communities like Megaspelaeon or Mendele. They were centres of patriotic conspiracy; far away in the recesses of the hills (the Greek monk preferring a hill-top as regularly as his brother of England settled on a river-bank) these mountain-fastnesses were excellent hiding-places for arms and for men. Later, when the Crescent was expelled, it appears that cloistered piety was still the natural foe of law. About's legend of that holy man of Attica who was in league with Hadji-Stavros is, it would seem, an allegory signifying the natural fraternity existing between Friar Tuck and Robin Hood; the picturesque Asomaton monastery on the slopes of Lycabettus, now almost surrounded, as it is, by the recent growth of fashionable Athenian suburbs and only ten minutes' walk from the Plateia Tou Syntagmatos, was within living memory a notorious haunt of brigands. They have changed all that now. There are no Turks to expel (no thanks to Greek politicians!), and organised brigandage is said to be extinct, except here and there on the Thessalian frontier, where the justice of kings and sultans can be readily evaded by a judicious flitting across the border. At any rate in central and southern Greece tourists may go their ways peaceably with no better pro-

tection than an interpreter, and no fear of being bidden to stand and deliver except by some hospitable shepherd or road-mender who asks you to share his glass of native wine. Monasteries no longer harbour brigands; but as they are landlords, and therefore suffer from agricultural depression, they have followed the examples of Irish landowners who turn their houses into hotels, and undertake to provide at least a lodging for the wanderer who would otherwise (and this only in centres of extreme civilisation) be thrown on the tender mercies of an inn which could only satisfy an entomologist. It is true that the reverend brethren give you in general nothing but a strictly unfurnished apartment and the universal wine which is in Greece a cheap substitute for water; and your dragoman will occasionally complain that if they do not harbour robbers any more, they do the plundering on their own account. Still, it often happens that furniture is better away; and agricultural depression must be relieved somehow.

Thus it came about that on a certain April day we were riding up from the Pamisus valley through its orchards and olive-groves in search of a night's lodging with the fraternity of Vourkano, the monastery that stands boldly out on a green shelf of ancient Ithome. It was a stage in that well-known tour which a few decades since entitled the traveller to pose as a hardy explorer, but is now nothing more than the regular Peloponnesian round, no more a matter for self-

sufficiency than the ascent of the Matterhorn is to-day, or the crossing of Central Africa will be fifty years hence. Pursuing this well-trodden route, we had slept at Mistra, where a whole hillside of ruined medieval churches and palaces surveys, incongruously enough, the wide Eurotas valley below: we had ridden over Taygetus in thunder and snow; and eventually, chilled and sodden, we had found a shelter under the roof of a leading citizen of Lada, a cold, unsavoury, picturesque little hamlet clinging to the western flanks of the great range separating Laconia from Messenia. Our entertainer's hospitality was Homeric; but his apartments were rather excessively ventilated for inmates accustomed to an effete civilisation and glass windows. Rural Greece has only shutters, and the shutters do not generally fit. But as the traveller comes down to Calamata and the plains of Messenia, he has summer before him: winter is left behind among the snows and pines of Taygetus; and as he rounds a shoulder of the great mountain-chain he sees the blue bay at his feet, and a rich tract of brown and green champaign spreading between him and the end of his day's journey in the western hills. It is indeed a country fair to see and full of all material good things, with its rivers, Nedon and Pamisus (real rivers of water, not the dry torrent-beds of other districts), its ready access to the sea, and its abundant semi-tropical vegetation. No wonder that the Laconians coveted it, and spent year after year in besieging the mountain strongholds which made Messenia a difficult conquest even for the redoubtable Spartan soldiers. For while Laconia itself is a Garden of Eden compared with the bleak hills of Arcadia and the dusty plains of

Attica, the broad valleys sloping down to Calamata and Nisi are even more smiling and restful to the eye.

Assuredly the outward aspect of Vourkano, as we climbed the hill from Tsepheremini, was most encouraging to the weary traveller who had tasted hardships. The high white monastery, set amidst green fields, cypresses, and orchards, and backed by the great mass of Ithome, on a spur of which it stands, seemed to his hopeful eyes to be surrounded by an atmosphere of sanctity and hospitality. Jolting over the fieldpaths on the Greek apology for a saddle, one conjured up visions of Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time, and fat monks dispensing comforts at once spiritual and material, especially material. It was not really a justifiable expectation; still in the event we had perhaps some cause to quarrel with Fortune. We had dreamed of holy men smiling and hospitable; but the reverend brethren who received us in the archway of their quadrangle hardly deigned a word of greeting, and their manner of addressing our dragoman, Themistocles, implied that they wished him and us anywhere else. We had been told of guest-chambers; alas, it was too obvious that here was the secret of our hosts' lack of effusiveness; we had come at an unlucky time, when the nakedness of the land was revealed. There had been a great fire in the monastery, and the upper cells, opening out of the gallery, were on one side of the quadrangle blackened and roofless. Worse than this, it appeared that all the cooking utensils had perished in the flames, to the great anger of Themistocles, who went about demanding of heaven and earth how one should cook a dinner without a *casserole*. For a moment it seemed that board and lodging alike would be denied us. But the crisis passed;

Themistocles (like his namesake, a man invincible in emergencies) cooked a meal which proved that man can after all live without *casseroles*; we were lodged where at least there were four walls and a roof, and despite alarming rumours of gigantic mice ("aussi grands qu'ils font la chasse aux chats!") we passed a tolerable night.

Next morning all petty evils were forgotten. What are draughts and damp and lack of a *casserole*, when valley and mountain are smiling in the sunlight, and the steep slopes of Ithome are bright with the first freshness of a Greek April? It is a stiff climb from the monastery to that famous citadel; but the Greek horse (τὸ ἄλογον, the Unreasonable, as he is most unjustly called) makes nothing of mere steepness. He climbs like a cat up the rocky path, or up the rocks where there is no path; while his rider is carried safely and as comfortably as may be up over grass, shale, and crag, and the panorama of south-western Greece broadens momentarily below.

It is not till quite near the mountain summit that the few massive rectangular blocks are passed which are all that time and the Spartans have left of the ancient Messenian stronghold. There is a certain kinship between the citadel of Ithome and the monastery of Vourkano, in so far as both represent a mixture of religion and warfare; for in the ages when high places of worship and sacrifice were also centres of national life, Ithome was the sanctuary and fortress of all Messenia, whatever that somewhat vague geographical term may have included. Here was the first and the last asylum of Messenian liberty. In those early wars with Sparta, which are really almost as legendary as the tale of Troy, Aristodemus, one of the great

national heroes, is said to have held this mountain-top against the Spartan invader, until he himself perished and his walls were levelled with the ground. Evidently it is not the traces of that ancient warfare that we see to-day. But these massive fragments of fortification which nearly encircle the little plateau on the summit may perhaps have found part of the ramparts built at a later day (some fifteen years after Salamis) by the revolted Helots who entrenched themselves and for years defied attack in this historic centre of their forefathers' nationality. Then with this eventual capitulation Ithome practically disappears from history, reappearing indeed, but only for a moment, a century later, till the place with all its associations of legend and history, heroes and Helots, passes under the dominion of the Greek Church.

True to its traditions, it is still a sanctuary; a holy place consecrated to widely diverse creeds. Here in dark antiquity those human sacrifices, of which the dim and legendary memory so constantly clings to the beginnings of ancient religions (inheritances handed down from primitive savagery), are said to have been offered to Zeus of Ithome, or rather to the local or tribal deity whose cult came to be identified with the Zeus-worship of a more polished age. There is a huge flat-topped rock at the northern end of the summit, itself perhaps the very altar of sacrifice; and built right against it stands a little solitary *metokhi* (an appendage, that is to say, of the mother-monastery of Vourkano), its cells for the most part in ruins and its tiny Byzantine church sadly in need of restoration. It is not altogether uninhabited; there are signs of an inmate, and some flower-beds showing traces of human care. One solitary Stylites lives here, perhaps to ensure his passport to heaven;

or possibly sojourn here may be a penance inflicted on erring brethren of the house of Vourkano. But just now even he is not to be seen, and the place is absolutely deserted. There is the altar-rock, with its recollections of savage human sacrifices and wild battlings for freedom, haunted surely by the ghosts of priests and warriors of old. And in the *metokhi* is a little portal with the inscription rudely carved over it in ill-spelled Greek: *Blessed is he who has obedience and love, for he is an imitator of our good Master*. Truly not only men but places also in their time play many parts.

All about and around Ithome the course of history has left its traces. As you look down from the summit over one of the finest landscapes in Greece, valley and hill all illumined by the incomparable light of a Greek spring-day, you see to the east the plain of the Pamisus, as it flows from the hills towards Calamata: to the north and west lie the lower slopes of Ithome, green fells sprinkled with patches of cultivation and woodland; and across them runs a long line of wall, part of the fortification of Messene, that later city which Epaminondas founded a century after the Helot revolt. He had already humbled the pride of Sparta in the field; and the Lacedaemonians were to be finally curbed by the foundation of two strong and hostile cities on their borders, Megalopolis in Arcadia, and Messene. The establishment of the latter was even more than an insult to Sparta and a check to her ambition; for Messene was to be the capital of a new and independent country, carved out of the very best of Laconian territory, the rich valleys west of Taygetus which Sparta had held as her own for four centuries. Now, intended as it was to play so important a part in Peloponnesian

politics as the coercion of a nation of warriors till lately almost invincible in the open field, the new city was founded with due pomp and ceremony. The site chosen was at the foot of Ithome, that holy place of Messenia, one of the two horns of the Peloponnesus, the traditional stronghold of legendary champions who had defied the Spartan invader. A new acropolis was built on the top of Ithome itself; lower down, where the rocky mountain side gave place to a gentler incline, the birth of Messene was celebrated by a mixed multitude of Greeks, all for the moment united to exult over this symbol of the downfall of their ancient enemy. The most skilful architects of Hellas were employed to build a new city on what was already one of the loveliest sites in that land of beauty. It was to stand where Ithome falls in slopes and terraces to the fertile valley below, high enough to command a noble view of the hollow vale southwards and the blue Messenian gulf beyond: a brook of clear water ran through the town, the Black Spring which has given its name to the modern village of Mavrommati; and high above all to the north-east frowned the acropolis of Ithome. What with Nature and the best art Hellas could produce, Messene must surely have been one of the most beautiful cities of Greece; and even now when her glory is departed and the pillars of her temples lie grass-grown among green fields and orchards, she has still a beauty and a charm of her own, and none the less because the spade of excavation has so far dealt gently with her. Perhaps the reason is partly want of funds, land being fertile and proportionately dear; moreover, archaeological research now busies itself, as is natural, less with the classical period than with the prehistoric civilisations of the Ægean and the brave men who lived before Aga-

memnon, so much so indeed that even the art of Mycenae is considered as representing a period of decadence. Whatever be the cause, Messene has been, comparatively speaking, let alone. The little theatre has been laid bare, and elsewhere some work has been done; but for the most part the ancient city's sleep is unbroken. And, if one may dare for a moment to regard antiquity from a strictly æsthetic and sentimental point of view, she has lost nothing by that.

Every student of course realises the enormous value of excavation; but when he is away from museums and sees nothing but the havoc wrought by pick and spade, his gratitude is apt to be a little tempered. No doubt the thing is inevitable. Our modern passion for the naked fact will never be satisfied with hint and suggestion; we must stand on the very stones of the street, we must bare the innermost recesses of the house, we must rifle the grave itself. Yet should we really gain (after such fashion one may suppose a sentimentalist to meditate) were Messene, like the Roman Forum or the Altis of Olympia, a naked ruin, a chaos of skeleton antiquities? Certainly it would be a sacrifice of pure natural beauty. Perhaps that is no great matter; yet for many, imagination finds it easier to people ancient sites with ancient life when they have been left to fulfil their peaceful destiny, unprofaned by an exposure which shows much that was never meant to be seen, or a restoration which by its necessary incompleteness is less suggestive than no restoration at all. Some excavation there must be, that imagination may have a solid basis; but let it be done without wanton excess, sparingly. We are more directly, certainly more agreeably and pathetically, conscious of the vicissitudes of human life, when change has not been rudely diverted from its

natural course; we are more alive to the mortal things which touch the mind when we see but the grave, than if we could actually touch the bones, the crumbling corpse of the Past that lies beneath. It is the broken column and the green grass growing over it that speak more eloquently than handbooks and museums of the transience of Man and the permanence of Nature.

Race after race, man after man,  
Have thought that my secret was  
theirs,  
Have dreamed that I lived but for  
them,  
That they were my glory and joy.—  
They are dust, they are changed, they  
are gone! I remain!

Thus pleads the sentimentalist, uttering words which, as no one knows better than himself, he must eventually eat with sorrow and humiliation.

Time allowed us but little leisure to see the special glory of Messene, those fortifications which Pausanias declared to be the strongest he knew from sight or personal report. Designed as this town was to hold Sparta in check by keeping in touch with the Great City in Arcadia, it was natural that her most important outlets should look towards Laconia on the east and the Arcadian confederacy to the north; and indeed the conformation of the ground makes this arrangement the natural one. The Laconian Gate lay in a depression between Mount Ithone and Mount Euan (a southern continuation of the Ithome ridge) just above the monastery of Vourkano; of this a few massive blocks alone remain, which we had passed on our way to the old acropolis. But the Arcadian Gate stood right in our midday path; for we were riding northwards towards Arcadia and Elis, and thus, without delay and the fear of angering an imperious dragoon, we had the opportunity of seeing

one of the most famous relics of antiquity. This gateway, constructed according to the theories of fortification current in the fourth century before the Christian Era, resembles the celebrated Double Gate of Athens; that is to say, it consists of an inner and an outer entrance, with a circular walled space between. So, when your enemy has burst the outer barrier, he is hemmed in by a ring of the garrison, darts and stones raining upon him from the circle of wall to right and left, in front and rear; and he has thus to continue his attack on the inner gate under the most unfavourable conditions possible. But, unlike the Athenian Dipylon, the whole structure here survives above ground in the most remarkable perfection. A great block, some eighteen feet in length, has fallen obliquely across the inner entrance and partially bars the way; but the masonry of the interior circle is in excellent preservation, and on the city-side you tread for some thirty yards the stones of the ancient paved street. All the building, as we saw it, was most delightfully softened and adorned by trees and shrubs in their freshest April green, half concealing the line of towered wall that stretches to right and left up the hillsides in the depression between which ran the ancient road to Megalopolis. It would be hard to find a parallel to this picture of untouched antiquity, in itself supremely interesting and giving an added charm to scenery already charming. Years ago there were

pieces of our own Roman Wall that gave a similar impression. But the wild loneliness and natural beauty of Housesteads may ere now have been sacrificed to the cause of scholarship.

For all her beauty and her mighty fortifications Messene played no important part in the history of Greece. The best period was past; and presently came the Macedonian, and in later years the Roman, who took little account of double gates and towered walls:

For naught is tower or ship, if men be not therein.

At all times the great length of wall must have been extremely difficult to defend; indeed it looks as if the actual houses of the city could hardly have extended so far as its fortifications. To-day these are but an incident in the landscape; and within as well as without are fields and orchards, and Messenians tilling the soil after the domestic Greek fashion, the father working in the midst of his household, gravely watched by his dog, his goat, and his pig. Through such scenes and along green oak-studded hillsides we rode towards Diavolitsi; and all the way Themistocles (a dragoman devoid of reverence) ceased not to inveigh against the monks of Vourkano in general and their reverend prior in particular, *ce grand diable* as he called him. It appeared that the holy man had outwitted Themistocles in the matter of a drachma.

A. D. GODLEY.



## THE MYSTERY OF THE MUD-MARKS.

It will be remembered that in 1894 there was a great stir in Northern India over a matter which was known as the Mud-daubing Movement. By some means a mystery had arisen on the Nepaulese frontier. It was noticed by European and Native alike, that several trees in many large mango-topes were being smeared with clots of white mud, and in some cases a solitary long black hair was found adhering to the mud. So long as the sign was but a local affair it attracted no particular notice, beyond giving the ignorant agriculturalists a topic for conversation. But the phenomenon spread, until in a month it had covered almost the whole area of Bengal. From native gossip it became a topic of public speculation, and then the European Press took the matter up. Yet the means by which this strange sign spread remained a mystery, profound and inexplicable; and as the area over which the daubing took place increased, the interest in the matter grew to fever-pitch. By the end of May it had developed into a serious panic. In spite of strenuous efforts to penetrate it, the mystery remained unsolved. The correspondence columns of the leading journals teemed with theories on the subject; some laughed at it, others received it with the utmost alarm, maintaining that it was the work of native anarchists, or that it compared in purport to the circulation of the *chupatti* which preceded the great mutiny of 1857. More observant folk assured the public that it was simply the work of homestead cattle, scraping

the mud off their backs after they had wallowed. The more flippant were positive that the village children were playing a practical joke upon the credulous public. But the upshot of it all was, that in spite of the vigilance of the police, mud-daubing increased both in circulation and mystery, until the Europeans of Bengal were thoroughly alarmed; to such good purpose indeed were their fears aroused, that a revolver could not be bought in the Presidency towns for love or money. And so far as I know, the agency by which the mud-patches spread, or their object, is a mystery to this day. For myself, though I cannot explain much, I have been afraid to tell the little that I know until to-day, when I am clear of the East for ever.

During the year in which the mystery appeared, I was the manager of an outwork of a large plantation in upper Bengal. I was the only European in the station, my nearest neighbour being away. My home was comfortable enough, and as I liked the native of India, and had taken the trouble to make myself acquainted with his habits and language, I did not find the solitary life too irksome. I had read about the mud-daubing in the papers, but as no sign of it appeared in my neighbourhood, I treated the report with a certain amount of indifference; especially as I had questioned many of my native servants and friends and had satisfied myself that they knew nothing further about the matter than the gossip in the bazaars that it was existent, and was the work of a *debi* (spirit).

I had been troubled with the depredations of thieves, who had frequently broken into my cattle-sheds and stolen the grain of the draught-bullocks. The pilfering had become so systematic that I determined to play detective myself, knowing that the thieves could not be successful so often without collusion on the part of my night-watchman. Occasionally therefore, when my household believed me to be asleep, I would steal out into the night and make a solitary patrol of the premises. Three or four times I made the round without success; but one evening, early in June, we had a dust-storm followed by a considerable fall of rain. The clouds made the night as dark as pitch, an ideal night, I thought, for the grain-lifters. It may have been midnight, or perhaps a little earlier, that I started on my round. Fearing that some of the grooms might be awake in the stables, I did not keep to the path, but skirted round my small garden into a mango-grove which stood behind it. It was very dark and I had to feel my way with a stick; I remember regretting that I had ever left the bungalow, for without a lantern I was in constant fear of treading on a snake or scorpion. The air was full of insect-voices, for the recent rain had brought hosts of ground-cricket to the surface, and they were chirruping in shrill concert. The bull-frogs too had been transported to happiness by the water, and were declaiming in a chorus of quavering bellows.

Though it was too dark to see with any clearness, I became aware of figures moving stealthily near me, dark shadows flitting among the tree-trunks; it was only by their movement that I could distinguish them. Concluding that I had stumbled upon the thieves, and congratulating myself

thereon, suddenly my ear caught a sound which made me all attention. It was a swishing sound, hardly perceptible indeed, but reminding me of bill-stickers at work upon a wall. In a second the truth flashed upon me; I had discovered the mud-daubers, had come upon them red-handed at their work!

The situation seemed so strange and ghostly that a fearful excitement pervaded my whole being, and I stood irresolute. For the moment I was not sure whether I was face to face with the supernatural or not; then I heard a voice, muffled and whispering, but it declared the mortal to me, and I do not hesitate to say that I drew a long breath of relief. My interest was fully aroused, and determined to discover whom these midnight marauders might be, I crept closer, and instinctively sank to a crouching posture. Though I could make out no detail, yet I was able to count at least four figures at work among the tree-trunks. Then, suddenly, a man stood motionless, outlined against the lesser darkness of a break in the wood. I had seen enough, for in the ungainly mass which exaggerated his head, I recognised the hair-coil of a Biragi, a religious mendicant of a particularly truculent order.

I had indeed discovered the agency of the mud-daubing, and knowing the disposition of these half-mad wanderers, whom no law binds and no order restrains, I crept cautiously away, for I knew not what extremes might follow my discovery.

This discovery I liked not. It may have been the simple uneasiness bred of the darkness of that stormy night, but the journey back to my bungalow seemed terribly long, and I had a sensation of being followed. Once in my own verandah, and with the light of a candle, my courage returned, and for a moment I con-

templated waking some of the servants and raiding the daubers. Under the influence of a cigarette, however, I thought better of this, my maturer reasoning making me prefer to leave perhaps the most wide-spread of secret brotherhoods alone. As events proved, it was well that I took this course.

Having finished my cigarette, I turned into bed, the punkah swinging spasmodically, the cold air after the storm doubtless having made the operator in the next room more sleepy than usual. I was young and healthy, and even my strange nocturnal adventure did not keep me awake. In a few minutes I was asleep, my last thoughts being those of congratulation that the night was such a cool one after the week of stifling weather which had preceded the storm.

I awoke suddenly with the impression that a great weight had fallen upon my chest. Then I felt that I was surely choking. I could not move, and all that I could see was the white gleam of the punkah swaying above me. In a moment the truth was evident, and amid the pain of strangulation I realised that a stout bamboo had been placed across my neck and that two strong men were holding it down on either side of me. Slowly they were killing me; already my lungs felt as if filled with molten lead; I tried to struggle, but I was powerless. Then the bamboo was relaxed a little, and I do not know which was the more excruciating, the absence of air, or the return of it into my lungs. The relaxation was only slight, but it was sufficient to allow of a painful respiration. At

last I became aware of a form bending over me, and again I recognised the mass of matted hair. I knew what had happened; the Daubers had discovered me, and now were intent upon destroying evidence for ever. Next a voice whispered in my ear: "Will you swear never to divulge what you have seen to-night?" What could I do? The axe was laid to the root of the tree; I was as good as a dead man; I swore. "So be it, but one of us will remain with you; treat him well." With that the bamboo was switched off my neck and I lay alone, bathed in perspiration and panting for breath.

In the morning, when my servants were moving about the house, I went on to the verandah. A mendicant appeared and asked for alms. I felt compelled to give, for my neck was still smarting from the rough handling of the previous night. For a whole year that mendicant billeted himself on the plantation. Is it wonderful that I kept a silent tongue?

In due course my servants reported that the daubing had appeared in my garden. They shook their heads and said it was "*Debi bat* (supernatural)." I agreed with them.

I can throw no light on the reason for the circulation of this peculiar sign; my knowledge is confined to the agency which spread it, and that knowledge proved a sufficient weight for me to bear. But it is a curious coincidence that the strange mud-daubing preceded a period of unprecedented unrest and affliction in India. It was followed by plague, famine, earthquakes, war, rioting, murder, and tribulation.

LIONEL JAMES.

## OUR AUTOMOTOR OMNIBUS.

THERE is a certain collect in our prayer-book in which allusion is made to things that are more than we can either desire or deserve. Something rather after this nature, to myself at all events, was our new automotor omnibus, a present to the establishment from our good Aunt Hannah. Miss Hannah Lovejoy was, if the truth be told, aunt only by courtesy and kindness, being in reality a very distant cousin of my wife. But she had first of all adopted Molly (my wife) when the latter was left an orphan in early childhood, and later on had been graciously pleased to accept myself (a briefless barrister) as her titular nephew-in-law, and had practically established me as squire of the parish of which my father had been vicar for thirty years past. I really think that Aunt Hannah, who had dowered my wife in the most liberal manner, only retained a moiety of her large income in order that she might from time to time enjoy the pleasure of making us some costly present. I gathered from what I had overheard that the advent on the scene of this latest addition to an already lengthy list of benefactions was a mere sequel to the fact that Molly, who was rather fond of novelties and of castle-building, had once in Aunt Hannah's presence volunteered the remark that it would be infinitely more pleasant to make our annual jaunt to the sea-side in an automotor carriage of our own, than to be cooped up for six hours in a "horrid, shaky, dusty railway-carriage." Aunt Hannah, true fairy godmother, had taken the hint, and

here was an automotor omnibus, ordered by herself and to a certain extent actually designed by herself, for a little seat at the end had been added by Aunt Hannah's express desire.

"I know, my dear," she remarked to Molly, "that I am very old-fashioned; but when I was a girl every omnibus had a seat at the end and I always used to like to sit upon it. When I went to London two years ago to see the dentist, I thought I would like to try once more what a ride in a public omnibus felt like; so I got into one and went to sit down in my favourite place, and there was no seat; so I sat right on to the floor, and it was exceedingly uncomfortable and embarrassing for all parties. You see, dear, the omnibus was very narrow, and I had my sealskin cloak on, and if it had not been for the conductor and a policeman and two or three other kind people, I really think I should have been there now."

I could quite imagine the situation. For Aunt Hannah is a very substantial lady, and has, like many other elderly people, a decided taste for being warmly clad. I am not a particularly good judge of a lady's weight, but when duly equipped for a drive in the winter, or a railway journey, I should guess that our dear old benefactress would pull down the beam at eighteen or twenty stone. The builder, to whom Aunt Hannah must have confided her intention of occupying that particular seat herself, had made his calculations as to the sitting-room she might require on a

liberal scale, with the result that our automotor omnibus was about a foot broader than its London relations. This gave to the vehicle a decidedly cumbersome appearance, and as I stood contemplating our new possession I felt that, had I been given the choice, I might have preferred an equivalent in hard cash. However, it was clearly my duty to make the best of Aunt Hannah's present, and I soon found that our white elephant needed someone to champion its cause. Giles, the old coachman, one of those privileged individuals whose long service seems to entitle them to have a word in their master's business, evidently resented its presence in the yard.

"Well," said he, "what are you going to make of that great ugly thing, Master George? Going to get a elephant to draw it, I suppose; leastways none of my carriage-horses sha'n't try."

"Thank you, Giles," I replied loftily; "they won't be required. It's an automotor carriage."

"Well, what's a horto-motor carriage, then? If it don't want horses nor yet a elephant to draw it, I don't see it's a carriage at all,—not a gentleman's carriage, anyway."

"My good Giles," I exclaimed, "do you never read the papers? Have you never heard of the new automotor conveyances?"

"No, I don't never read the papers, Master George," he replied sulkily, "and if that's a horto-motor conveyance, I don't want to hear about one nor see one neither. They dratted traction-engines is bad enough, but I never reckoned as you or the old lady was going to set one up."

To the best of my ability (I was not very clear on the point myself) I attempted to demonstrate to the obstinate old fellow the difference between a traction-engine and an

automotor omnibus, and to point out all the advantages that the latter possessed. "No taking your horses out of a warm stable on a cold night, you see, Giles, no standing at the door in frosty weather while the ladies are putting on their wraps," etc., etc. But Giles remained unconvinced. Presently he enquired in quite an aggressive manner: "And who's a going to drive it?" This was really a point that I had never taken into consideration. However, the obvious reply was, "You, I suppose."

"Thank ye, Master George," he answered shortly. "I've lived in this world nigh on to sixty years and never done no stoking yet, and don't mean to neither."

"Stoking?"

"Yes, stoking,—leastways you said as there was a engine."

"My good fellow, it's not that sort of an engine at all. It goes by an oil-engine; it's only a case of sitting on the box and turning a handle."

"Well, I aint no hand at organ-grinding, and I don't know as there's any one on the place as is;" and with this parting shot Giles dived into the recesses of the saddle-room, where I could hear him relieving his feelings by grumbling at the groom.

When I went into the drawing-room after dinner that night, I found my wife very busy and very full of importance. It is a phase in Molly's character that whenever she is busy she is important, and *vice versa*. Aunt Hannah had retired to bed with a headache, having been, I think, over-excited by the arrival of the omnibus. Molly being, as I have said, busy and important, it was clearly incumbent upon me to enquire into the nature of her occupation. "What in the world are you busy about, darling?"

"Working; working for you, Sir."

"Working for me? Well, that is

right enough ; but pray what are you making,—rabbit-nets ?”

“No, I am not making rabbit-nets ; try again.” I suggested a new lawn-tennis net.

“No, not a lawn-tennis net ; try again.”

Now, like other male beings, I abhor guessing where there is nothing to be gained, so I gave it up.

“Well, then, Mr. Curiosity, I am making a hammock.” A hammock ; and a hammock for me ? What, in the face of the earth, was I going to do with a hammock ? Were all my friends and relations going to conspire together to present me with a herd of white elephants ? “I don’t want a hammock,” I exclaimed, and then added with more emphasis than graciousness, “I abominate hammocks.”

“Oh you ungrateful monster ! How like a man ! And yet you will want a hammock all the same. Now don’t frown at the wife of your bosom in that awful manner, but listen while I tell you my charming little plan. You will listen, won’t you ?”

Of course I undertook to listen, and the whole secret was soon out.

We were to start for the seaside on a certain Monday, some four weeks off, in our automotor omnibus, Giles on the box, Aunt Hannah, Molly, a maid, and myself inside ; or, if I preferred, I might sit on the box with Giles. Molly had calculated that we should have to spend three nights on the road, when she had planned that Aunt Hannah, the maid, and herself should occupy the omnibus, while Giles and I were expected to sleep in hammocks slung upon neighbouring trees. “I thought it would be so nice for you both,” she explained, “in this lovely weather. I’ve often felt as if I should like to sleep out of doors myself, but of course one can’t do it in one’s own garden. But there we should be just like a gipsy caravan.

We should have such delightful picnic meals by the roadside and boil our own kettle, and in the evening we would encamp in a wood, and you and Giles could sling your hammocks on trees, and bathe in a river or a brook in the morning, and—— what’s the matter, dear ? Do say you approve.”

From the sudden change in Molly’s voice, I am afraid that my hair must have been visibly standing on end at the prospect unfolded to me. I am really at a loss to say which idea commended itself least to my liking, the *al fresco* meals, the *al fresco* slumber, or the *al fresco* bath to be followed by the *al fresco* toilet in the morning.

“My darling Molly,” I remarked quite kindly, though firmly, “from your point of view all this may be very attractive ; and if you and Aunt Hannah have set your hearts upon sleeping in an omnibus by all means do so. And if you can work upon Giles’s feelings and persuade him either to sit on the box of an automotor carriage or to sleep in a hammock on a tree, I will promise not to interfere with the arrangements. But for my own part I must absolutely decline either to sleep in a hammock out of doors, or to bathe and perform my toilet in public, or to eat my meals on the roadside. No, my dear, if we camp at all, we will camp near a town if you please, where I can get my dinner, bed, and breakfast at a decent hotel ; and you and Aunt Hannah can sleep in the omnibus or the hammocks just as you like.”

Poor Molly looked terribly crest-fallen and disappointed for a minute, but fortunately the thought of Aunt Hannah in a hammock came to the rescue, and we both laughed till our sides ached.

“Now, don’t you fuss, little woman,” I said when I had re-



covered myself; "we will work out something between us before the day comes. But in the meanwhile we must provide a driver for that precious omnibus. Old Giles has struck."

"Giles has struck?"

"Yes, refuses to have anything to do with motor conveyances; objects to them on principle, I suppose, as I object to hammocks."

"Oh, bother the hammocks!" exclaimed Molly pettishly, and with that she threw the result of her evening's labour, some two yards of netting, on to the fire, where it frizzled and smoked for a minute, and smelt abominably for the next hour. "I can tell who will drive, though," she continued, "if that obstinate old Giles won't, and that is Alfred."

"By Jove, yes! I never thought of him."

Alfred was a fresh-faced, muscular youth, a *protégé* of Aunt Hannah's, under whose protection he had passed through the various grades of garden-boy, house-boy, and under-footman, and had now arrived at the dignity of being head-footman, and was a very important functionary both in his own eyes and in the estimation of the household. To give Alfred his due, he was a man of many virtues, absolutely devoted to his mistress, a very civil and obliging servant, and possessed with a ready good-nature and spirit of self-confidence that might have prompted him to volunteer with equal alacrity either to command a regiment of cavalry or to stand umpire in a county cricket-match. It was a recorded fact that he had once offered to carry Aunt Hannah upstairs, a feat which a professional weight-lifter would hardly have cared to undertake. The dear old lady had just returned from a shopping

expedition, and by way of making a remark to Alfred, who was following her with a load of parcels, observed: "The stairs look very long to-day, Alfred." "Not at all, Ma'am, thank you," was the answer. "If you are at all tired, Ma'am, would you allow me to carry you, Ma'am?" The offer was made in such good faith and with so evident a desire to be of assistance, that Aunt Hannah did not even allow herself to smile as she graciously declined the proffered assistance. But Molly, who overheard the conversation, was forced to beat a hasty retreat into the drawing-room, where she could laugh at leisure.

I interrogated the great Alfred later on in my smoking-room. "Alfred," I said, "do you think that you would be up to driving or steering the automotor omnibus?"

"Oh yes, Sir, I could manage her all right. Why I rode a elk into Barksted on Wednesday, and drewed a giraffe behind me."

For the moment I really thought that the man had suddenly taken leave of his senses. "Rode an elk and drew a giraffe behind you! What in the name of nonsense are you talking about?"

"Oh, begging your pardon, Sir, I was forgetting that you was not a rider,—it's not animals, Sir, not live animals that is, Sir, but it's what they call bikes or bicycles, Sir. A giraffe is a high bike, Sir, and a elk is a more solid machine like. It was Mr. Binks's elk, Sir [Mr. Binks was the butler, and certainly required a fairly solid machine to carry him], and it was the Curate's giraffe, Sir, as had punctured hisself, and he wanted it set right, Sir, and so Mr. Binks he lent me his elk to tow it. And the roads was awful; I don't know as Mr. Binks——"

"Oh, bother Binks," I interrupted,

"and his bicycle too. Look here, Alfred, an automotor carriage is not quite the same thing as a bicycle, you know."

"Oh, no, Sir," he assented; "but lor bless you, Sir, [it was a failing of Alfred's to become rather too familiar when he wished to inspire confidence] I ain't afraid of no sort of a carriage. Why, I drove a steam-plough once."

I do not know that even this apparently unassailable argument had much effect upon my mind. However, it was satisfactory at any rate to feel that there was one person in the establishment who thought that he was capable of driving an automotor carriage, and was ready to step into the breach if old Giles continued obstinate. "Well, you had better go to bed and think it over, Alfred," I said finally; "you shall have a look at the omnibus to-morrow;" and amid a shower of protestations Alfred withdrew.

On the following morning Molly and I were sitting alone at breakfast (Aunt Hannah seldom came down-stairs before eleven o'clock) when a sudden thought occurred to me. "May I ask, Molly," I enquired, "what you had intended to do with that precious infant of yours when you made all your plans about going to the seaside in our omnibus?"

"Baby? Why of course he would go by train with his nurse, George. You really do not suppose, darling, that I should,—that I should,—and here she came to a dead stop.

"That you should do what, dear?"

"Why, that I should let poor baby travel in an automotor carriage; of course he would go by train."

"But, my dear woman, I thought that you objected to trains, and said that they were always dusty and shaky and horrid."

"Oh, yes, I dare say that I did say so, and so they are; but then after

all one knows more about them, and they are much safer, you will allow, George."

This was really a bit too strong. I am by no means devoid of paternal affection, even though I am not so absolutely wrapped up with my son and heir as Molly and Aunt Hannah are. I am honestly fond of the little brat and hate to hear him cry; but I could not help feeling that Molly's remark savoured of cold-blooded calculation, and almost implied that it would not matter much if the baby's father, mother, great-aunt, and sundry domestics came to unutterable grief in the automotor omnibus, provided that the child himself was safely stowed away in a railway-carriage. "Perhaps in the circumstances, my dear Molly," I said rather stiffly, "it might be as well that we should all go by train."

"Oh, but that would spoil all the fun of the thing," exclaimed the lady. "I don't suppose that there is much danger really for us; but I am sure, George, that you yourself would not like to run any risks with baby."

I am not particularly fond of running risks on my own account, but did not think it politic to say so. I held my tongue, waiting for further elucidations, and presently they came. After a rather prolonged silence, Molly commenced. "You see, George dear,—though I don't suppose you will understand,—men never do understand these things somehow,—but you will agree with me, darling (won't you?) that it would be a dreadful thing if anything did happen to poor baby."

"Oh, yes, dear," I assented hastily, "I quite feel that; but—hum—ha—I confess that I don't quite see exactly what you are driving at."

"Well, George dear, it's not very easy to explain to people who seem determined not to understand. But

you will admit that we do not know much about these automotor carriages, and there might be an accident, an explosion, or an upset, or something, and well—if anything—did—happen—to baby—what would become of all poor, dear Aunt Hannah's money? It would have to go to a hospital or to somebody no one ever knew anything about;" and having with difficulty managed to ejaculate this long sentence, which came out one word at a time, just as I have written it down, Molly fairly burst into tears over the picture of desolation which she had herself conjured up.

Of course there was nothing left for me (for I wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever may be my shortcomings as to that precious baby, I am not a brute so far as my wife is concerned) but to let my egg get cold and fly round the table to Molly's assistance. I comforted and consoled her in every way I could think of, assuring her again and again that Aunt Hannah, Alfred, the maid, and above all I myself, were ready to run the risk of being blown into countless smithereens so long as not a hair on the baby's head (there certainly were not many to spare) was in any way injured. I was so far successful in my efforts that I was presently able to resume my breakfast in tolerable comfort; and presently, when Molly had quite recovered her composure, I made a brilliant suggestion. "You are quite sure, dear," I remarked, "that you would not like to get your Uncle Tom down here for a day or two so that he and Aunt Hannah might take a trial trip in the omnibus? I have no doubt that Alfred would be delighted to drive them, and of course we should see that their wills were properly made before they started."

Uncle Tom, let me add, from whom Molly was supposed to have expecta-

tions, was a Crimean veteran, who lived at his club in London, and suffered from intermittent gout and a permanently bad temper.

For a moment Molly really took the proposition seriously. "I am afraid, darling, that it would hardly do. You see I don't think we should ever get dear Uncle Tom to move out of London, and besides, if any little thing did go wrong, he would very likely swear horribly and shock Aunt Hannah, and——"

"And not be in a proper frame of mind to be blown up aloft," I put in parenthetically.

"Oh, you bad boy," exclaimed Molly, "now I see that you are only laughing at me. But seriously, George, I think that we ought to try the thing on the roads about here before we attempt a long journey."

I cordially assented to this proposition, and, as I was myself obliged to go to London for a night on business, it was settled that Alfred, with the assistance of a groom, should make a trial of the omnibus on the high road in my absence, and, if the result proved satisfactory, should take Aunt Hannah, Molly, and myself for a formal trial-trip on the first convenient day. On my return from London, I received from the great Alfred an assurance that, "She ran as easy as butter, and made no noise nor smell nor anything."

"And you can manage it all right, Alfred?"

"Oh lor yes, Sir, why a baby in arms, or even the Missis herself could drive it. There's just a feeling on the box as if a bit of bacon were a frizzling under the seat, but not what any one wouldn't call a vibration."

Encouraged by this assurance, Molly, Aunt Hannah, and myself spent most of the evening in planning out a short circular tour for the next day, choosing a route by which we

could avoid villages and stiff hills, and have no more dangerous obstacle to pass than a bridge over the river with a toll-gate at one end. The next morning was fine and warm, so warm in fact that we postponed our expedition till late in the afternoon. Personally I was anxious to see the actual start, and so, having planted the ladies outside the front gates, I went into the stable-yard. There I found Alfred already mounted on the box, while old Giles was standing with his coat off and his hands in his pockets, posing as an unconcerned spectator, though I could see that he was really deeply interested in the proceedings.

"Are you ready, Alfred?" I asked.

"Right as rain, Sir," was the cheery answer.

"Go ahead, then."

Now whether the consciousness of being overlooked had upset Alfred's presence of mind, or whether he was merely over-anxious to distinguish himself, I cannot undertake to say. But certain it is that on receiving the order to go ahead, he managed at one and the same time to turn two contradictory handles and to put on moderate speed and a strong brake simultaneously. The effect of this combination of opposing powers was that the ill-used omnibus, anxious to do its best under difficulties, plunged forward for about three yards and then came to a dead stop, while the front wheels kept gently rising about half a foot in the air and then falling again without making any perceptible progress, reminding one rather of a ship riding at anchor in a heavy swell or a militia recruit practising the goose step.

"Why, d——d if she ain't jibbing at the start," roared out Giles, at once discarding his attitude of passive neutrality. "Get to her head, Bill,

quick, afore she kicks the place to pieces."

"Out of the light, you great silly," yelled Alfred, as the obedient Bill rushed forward with the evident intention of carrying out the order literally and planting himself in front of the omnibus. "She's all right; let her be. It's only as I got mixed up along of this blessed brake, and it's all right now," and as he spoke the omnibus commenced to travel quietly and easily down the yard.

"Now stop it," I shouted, and it stopped at once. "Alfred," I said very sternly, "you are quite sure that you can really control it now?"

"Oh, yes, Sir; I've got her tight. Why, Bill and me went three miles yesterday, and only run over a lame duck."

"Well, don't run over any ducks to-day, please. Go ahead."

"Begging your pardon, Mr. George," whispered Giles confidentially, "but if so be as Missis and Mrs. George is a going to travel in it, I think I'd best clap on my coat and go and sit alongside of Alfred, just to help him with that brake."

"Well, yes, Giles, I think you had better do so, if you don't mind," I replied; and accordingly Giles put on his coat and mounted the box with an air of professional gravity, contrasting strangely with his late attitude of indifference.

I was relieved to see that Alfred pioneered his way down the yard, through the gate, and round the sharp corner with perfect confidence.

We took up the ladies outside the front gate, and I got inside with them, Aunt Hannah of course occupying her own special seat, which she filled very comfortably, and we soon found ourselves sailing along the road at the rate of about twelve miles an hour, while the omnibus almost just-

fied Alfred's description of going along like butter. There was just the least perception of a throbbing sound, and a very gentle oscillatory movement, but nothing that could in any way be called uncomfortable. Under these happy conditions we had gone about three miles, and Aunt Hannah had produced her knitting, when the omnibus came to a sudden stop.

"What's wrong now?" I exclaimed.

"Do get out and see what the matter is, George," said Molly, who is always rather on the nervous side. I descended accordingly.

"What is the matter, Giles?"

"Oh, nothing much," he replied; "only a baker's cart run away; serve him right too for not leaving any one to mind it. Ah, there go the loaves and there goes the cart and horse into the ditch comfortably. Steady, my boy," he continued, apostrophising the horse which was some three or four hundred yards away from us; "it's no manner of good you struggling; we'll come and pull you out presently."

Accordingly, after I had reassured the ladies, Giles, Alfred, and myself went to the rescue of the baker's horse, which we found considerably frightened, but, barring a few scratches, quite unhurt. We unharnessed the animal and righted the cart, and were just resting from our labours when the baker arrived on the scene, very red in the face, very much out of breath, and very short in the temper.

"Pretty blooming goings on, these here, Mr. Engine-driver, ain't they?" he commenced, addressing Giles, who was just beginning to reharness the horse.

"You call me an engine-driver again and you'll find yourself in the wrong box, Mr. Dough-messer," retorted Giles, highly indignant.

"Hold your tongue, Giles," I interposed; "and if you have got anything to say, my man, say it to me."

"Anything to say? I've got a blooming lot to say, Mister. I'll have the law on you. What do you mean by upsetting of my cart?"

"I never touched your cart; the horse ran away."

"About time to run away too, when you comes puffing and snorting along the road with your blasted engine. Where's your red flag?"

"I don't happen to have a red flag; there is no reason why I should have one."

"What, not when you're driving of a traction-engine?"

"As it happens, I am not driving a traction-engine."

"Not driving a traction-engine?" he exclaimed in an angry scream.

"What do you call it then?"

"I call it what it is,—an automotor omnibus."

"You can jolly well call it what you like, but I tell yer it is a traction-engine;" and with that he stamped down the road to have a closer inspection of the machine, followed by Alfred and myself, Giles considerably holding the horse which he had just finished harnessing.

"You may as well pick up those loaves, Alfred," I remarked, "and put them back into the cart." For as they were lying all over the road, they seemed likely to obstruct the progress of the omnibus.

"There," said the baker, who was gradually cooling down, "didn't I say it were a traction-engine? You ain't got no horses."

"That does not make it a traction-engine," I replied. "It's an automotor carriage, and neither requires horses nor a red flag."

"Then I suppose there's one law for the rich and another for the poor. When a gemman drives it, you calls it

a horto-something and yer don't have no flag; but if a poor bloke were to ride on it, he'd have to call it a traction-engine and have a man to walk ahead with a flag."

"Oh, dear no," I answered; "the laws are the same for every one; but the only law that has been broken now is the Highway Act about leaving carts on the road without any one to look after them. Here's my card, my man; you probably know my name and you can summons me when you like, but I'm afraid you will find it rather an expensive process."

The baker seemed rather staggered on hearing this view of the case, and on finding that I was neither afraid of giving my address nor anxious about the result of an action at law. However, he accepted the card, and after fingering it for a moment, put it into his waistcoat-pocket. "Look here, Governor," he said presently, "we don't want to have no words about it, not you and I. Says you to me, 'How much will you take,' says you, 'to say nothin' more about it?'"

"Suppose I don't say anything of the sort," I answered, more inclined to laugh than to be angry at this sudden change of front.

"Give the poor man something, George, and let us get on," whispered Aunt Hannah from the interior of the omnibus, and unfortunately the baker overheard her.

"Look you here, Governor," he said, raising his voice and going up close to the carriage so that the inside passengers might catch his remarks; "here's you a swell with a carrivan of your own and two men on the box and all; and me a poor bloke, with a wife with twins and expecting more, a man as works hard for his food, and a whole baking spoilt, and cart knocked about, and horse all nohow, all along of you, as I don't say it was your fault, not if you—oh, thank you

kindly, Mum, you're a lady if your husband ain't, anyhow;" and off marched the baker in triumph, whistling as he went, and pocketing a sovereign which Molly, aided and abetted by Aunt Hannah, had quietly put into his hand. In another minute our friend had mounted his cart, and having apparently thrown one loaf of bread at Giles's head and another at Alfred's, he whipped up his horse and went off at full gallop down the road. I was a little annoyed myself by Molly's rather unnecessary liberality, but old Giles was simply dancing about the road in a perfect frenzy of rage, and continued to shake his fist and shout threats at the baker long after the latter was out of hearing. I learnt from Alfred, who looked rather amused than otherwise, that the baker on getting into his cart had picked out the two dirtiest loaves he could lay his hands upon and chucked them to the two men as a sort of reward for their assistance.

"Catch hold, old engine-driver," he shouted; "here's summat for you and your mate. I take it your governor keeps you a bit short."

When we resumed our journey, I sat outside with Giles and Alfred, partly in order to watch the working of the machinery, and partly because I was still a little sore over the incident of the baker and the sovereign. I noticed that foot-passengers generally stopped to have a good stare at our conveyance, but the two or three horses that we passed did not seem to be much disconcerted by it. We only travelled at a moderate pace, as I positively forbade any attempt to run the villain baker to ground. In about an hour we came in sight of the bridge with the toll-gate. The keeper of the gate was a rather well-known character in the neighbourhood, as in addition to his official salary he earned a good many odd



shillings in the course of the year by killing and cutting up the farmers' and cottagers' pigs. In the winter months Mr. Hodge's services were so much in request that his wife had to do most of the toll-gate work, but in summer he was generally to be found at his post, and on this particular day he was very much in evidence. As we approached the bridge, we saw, to our astonishment, that the gate was shut and the great Mr. Hodge was sitting on the top of it.

"Why, whatever is up with Master Hodge?" exclaimed Giles. "Man and boy I've driven through that gate for forty years, and I've never seen him do that afore."

When we pulled up at the gate Hodge showed no sign of any intention to relinquish his position, but sat there whistling with an air of stolid indifference.

"Well, Master Hodge, aren't you going to let us through?" enquired Giles.

"Noa, I aren't," was the reply. "I aren't a going to have no traction-engines over my bridge."

"This isn't a traction-engine, my good fellow."

"Aren't it? I knows better."

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Hodge; get off the gate and open it at once."

"I sha'n't do nothing o' the kind, so there, Mister." This was a poser, but Alfred at once suggested a solution of the difficulty. "You sit tight, Sir," he remarked, "and if I put on full speed, I'll bust that gate and old Hodge too."

I hastily declined to be an accessory before the fact to wilful murder; but it occurred to me that we might effect our object by feigning an attack. "Now you listen, Alfred, to what I say," I whispered. "If you let the 'bus move one inch, I'll discharge you on the spot; I only want to frighten

the man;" and then I shouted out loud to Hodge: "Now, my man, I give you one minute to get off that gate, and after that we'll drive straight through it. Be ready, Alfred," and I pulled out my watch; "ten seconds gone, twenty seconds—, thirty—, forty—"

"And the Lord have mercy on your soul," murmured Giles, with much solemnity.

The remark had such an effect on Hodge, that he tumbled off the gate with creditable celerity. "You'm no manner of right to drive traction-engines nor nothing that weighs more than six tons over my bridge," he remarked, as soon as he reached *terra firma*.

"It is not a traction-engine, and it does not weigh six tons," I said; "and if you don't open the gate at once, I'll take it off the hinges."

"Aunt Hannah says that she would like to walk over the bridge," screamed Molly from the inside. Aunt Hannah had evidently overheard some of our conversation and had been seized with the idea, not wholly unjustifiable, that her weight might make an appreciable difference. So, accompanied by Molly, she got out of the omnibus, and the two passed through the foot-gate and walked over the bridge, leaving me to make my own terms with the pork-butcher.

"Now," said Hodge, looking at me in an insinuating manner, "supposin' as how I were to let what you calls a omnibus and I calls a engine, go over my bridge, what are you goin' to stand?"

"The proper toll, of course," I answered sharply.

"Which there ain't no proper fare for they things. It's what I likes to charge."

"Or what the Master likes to pay," struck in Giles.

"Well, supposin' we was to say 'arf a crown, or five bob more like," suggested Hodge, adding the "five bob more like" very hurriedly, seeing that I did not look so indignant at the idea of the half-crown as he had perhaps expected.

"Oh, nonsense," I answered at once, to his huge disappointment; "I'll give you sixpence, which is three times the ordinary toll."

"Make it a bob, and I opens;" and weakly consenting, I handed over a shilling. Having now, as it were, concluded the terms of peace, Hodge opened the gate and, as I had got down to follow the ladies, he condescended to walk over the bridge with me and even to wax confidential. "Why, the baker he took a suvrin over this job, didn't he, and I only get a bob! He's a rare un to drive a bargain, is baker."

"Oh, the baker put you up to this game, did he?"

"Yes, he give me the tip, he did. But I say, Mister," he continued, jerking his head in the direction of Aunt Hannah, whom he evidently regarded from a strictly professional point of view, "the old lady would cut up well, wouldn't her? There's many a one as I knows on as would like to have one fed like that. Why, she'd go well-nigh forty score."

It was by no means the first time in my life that I had heard the phrase *cutting up well* used, not quite in the sense that Mr. Hodge applied it, in reference to Aunt Hannah; but I absolutely declined to discuss the question of the dear old lady's weight with a vulgar pork-butcher. "I don't think it's much concern of yours, Hodge," I said curtly, "what Miss Lovejoy weighs, and we'll talk about something else, please."

"Well, no offence, Mister, but it does a man's heart good to see such a one as her;" and after another long

stare at Aunt Hannah, Mr. Hodge sauntered back to his toll-gate.

By special request I again took an inside seat, and the ladies talked merrily about our adventures, while I could not help reflecting that if every short country expedition was to cost a guinea in incidental expenses, our white elephant was likely to prove a somewhat costly toy.

We were only two miles from home when Molly's evil genius prompted her to remark to Aunt Hannah, who had not spoken for some few minutes: "Auntie, dear, does not this little throbbing noise remind you of the engine on the Dover packet?"

"Yes, dear," responded Aunt Hannah, and then after a momentary pause she added in a tone of deep conviction: "and I am sorry to say, my dear, that whenever I hear that noise I feel that I must be ill, and—and——"

I will draw a veil over the scene that followed. Suffice it to say that Aunt Hannah acted in full accordance with her conviction, and that Molly, who, according to her lady-friends, has a sweetly sympathetic disposition, dutifully followed suit. We had to leave them at a labourer's cottage, whereby another half-crown was added to the incidental expenses.

"I knew all along as no good would come of it, no more nor out of they great ovens as Missis bought to hatch chickens in," remarked Giles with an air of unholy triumph, as he started half an hour later to fetch the ladies home in the brougham. "You mark my words, Master George, it's never no good goin' agin nature."

Our automotor omnibus is now on sale and may be viewed on the premises. If it is not sold within six months, Molly thinks that it will be a good plan to fit it up as a locomotive poultry-house, and to buy some prize Wyandottes to keep in it.

## THE LESSON OF 1881.

It is natural that recent events in the Transvaal should have produced a flood of reminiscences of the short and disastrous campaign of 1881; and, as there appear to be in many minds false conceptions of the causes and circumstances of our military failure on that occasion, an attempt to describe briefly the incidents of the three actions on the Natal border, and to point out the lessons to be derived from their unfortunate result, may possess some value.

It will be remembered that the Republic of the Transvaal had been annexed to the Empire in March, 1877, and that a large proportion of the Boers of that day had approved of the annexation; partly because of the unsatisfactory internal administration of the Republic, and partly because of its external weakness, which rendered its continued resistance to the surrounding black population very uncertain. The people of England had fair reason to believe that the Boers would in time come to appreciate the safety and prosperity that would be conferred on them by their acceptance of British rule; and, as a matter of fact, it is well known that three thousand out of the eight thousand adult Boers then inhabiting the Transvaal signed petitions in favour of the annexation.

Partly from a genuine national feeling and love of independence, which Englishmen must admire, but largely also in consequence of the persistent agitation of mercenary politicians, among whom Mr. Kruger, the present President, was prominent, the Transvaal Boers gradually worked them-

selves into a determination to regain, by either peaceful or violent means, the independence which they had resigned; and as the English Government, after its custom, had prematurely weakened the garrison in South Africa, and particularly that in the Transvaal, the desired opportunity for rebellion presented itself at the close of the year 1880, that is to say, within four years of the British annexation.

At this date the Governor of Natal and High Commissioner in South-Eastern Africa was Major-General Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, a distinguished staff-officer of unusual talent and force of character. Sir George, who at the time of his arrival in Natal in June, 1880, was under forty-five years of age, and in the prime of his mental and bodily powers, had seen active service in Kaffraria, in China, and in Ashanti. In the last-named expedition he had gained a high reputation by the energy with which he re-organised a collapsed transport-service; and his subsequent employment as private-secretary to Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India during the second Afghan war, had gained for him the assurance of a brilliant future. To this varied and valuable training Sir George Colley was now about to add the experience of an independent command, and it may safely be said that the confidence which he felt in himself was universally reflected in the minds of his professional superiors.

No sooner had General Colley assumed the reins of office from his predecessor in the post of High Com-

missioner (Sir Garnet, now Lord, Wolseley) than he made a rapid inspection of the military garrisons in the Transvaal. Few if any, signs of coming trouble were observed by him in the course of this journey, but he saw with natural alarm the extreme weakness of our position in the Boer territory.

The Transvaal garrison consisted of little more than the strength of two battalions, scattered over lines more than six hundred miles in extent; and, from the inefficiency of the means of transport then available in South Africa, unable to make any combined movements either for attack or defence.

The General determined to concentrate these detachments as much as possible, with the objects of saving expense in the carriage of supplies and of checking desertion, which had been terribly prevalent in the small and dull out-lying garrisons. Before however the desired concentration had been effected, the disaffection of the Boers came rapidly to a head, and the first move of a detachment not only coincided very nearly with the outbreak of rebellion, but unfortunately gave the Boer leaders a chance of inflicting a blow on our prestige which they promptly seized.

The first shot of the war was actually fired on December 16th, 1880, at the town of Potchefstroom; but the affair was merely an interchange of volleys brought about by the aggressive and insulting action of a body of mounted Boers, who moreover were the first to fire. On the same day the Boer leaders, then sitting at Heidelberg, wrote to Sir Owen Lanyon, the Resident at Pretoria, a formal demand for the restitution of the independence of the Transvaal; and at the same time they sent orders to the local Boer commandants to arrest the concentration march of the British detachments.

The detachments which had been ordered to move were two in number; one consisting of two companies of the 94th Regiment, ordered from Wakkerstrom to Standerton; the other, consisting of the head-quarters of the same regiment with about three hundred men, had been ordered from Middleburg to Pretoria.

As but brief notice can be taken of events in the Transvaal it must here suffice to say that the Wakkerstrom detachment, ably conducted by Captain Froom, 94th Regiment (now a Lieutenant-Colonel retired) reached its destination safely, while the disaster which befell the head-quarters of the regiment at Bronkhurst Spruit is well known. In spite of warnings of possible hostilities on the part of the Boers the unfortunate commander of the 94th marched on his way, hampered by a long train of waggons, and taking but the most meagre precautions against surprise. At the river-crossing which has given its name to the disaster the Boers suddenly appeared on all sides of the small main body of the 94th, and a peremptory order to cease his advance was handed to Colonel Anstruther. How unexpected was the appearance of the Boers may be judged from the fact that the band of the regiment was playing at the time.

Colonel Anstruther replied briefly that he should continue on his way, and ordered his men to extend for attack. Before, however, it was possible for any adequate preparations to be made, and while the bandmen and prisoners were endeavouring to get out their rifles from one of the waggons, a murderous fire was poured in on the unhappy detachment from all sides. The 94th defended themselves as best they could and returned the Boers' fire gallantly, but in less than ten minutes one hundred and twenty of them were either killed or disabled.

The officers exposed themselves fearlessly and were picked off almost immediately by the Boer marksmen. The courage displayed by all ranks was the one satisfactory feature of this disastrous episode; and by none was greater gallantry displayed than by the mortally-wounded commander of the little force, who disregarded his injuries and retained the command of his men to the last. Whether or not the attack of the Boers on the 94th Regiment is to be considered an act of treachery is a moot point; but it is safe to assert that no English commander would have attacked a Boer force in like manner.

The news of the outbreak of hostilities at Potchefstroom, of the declaration of independence at Hiedelberg, and of the disaster to the 94th at Bronkhurst Spruit came to the General in rapid succession, and those Englishmen who may have been tempted by the bitter smart of defeat to attack the memory of Colley should remember that his first act on hearing of the massacre of the 94th (for so it was universally called at the time), was to issue a general order to the British troops under his command, urging them, "Not to allow the soldierly spirit which prompts to gallant action to degenerate into a feeling of revenge," an utterance worthy of an English commander.

Colley's position was now a very anxious one. He had at and about Maritzburg a very small force of regular troops, and he had to choose between three courses, to all of which there were grave objections. He could attack the enemy at once with the small force at his disposal, with the risk of suffering a defeat which would undoubtedly encourage any waverers among the Boers to fly to arms: he could accept the offers of the Natal colonists to raise local levies as reinforcements, particularly

mounted troops of which he stood greatly in need; or he could await reinforcements from England. Being aware that delay on his part would do almost as much as a defeat to encourage the spread of the rebellion, General Colley at once decided not to await reinforcements. He also decided not to accept the aid of local corps, with the praiseworthy wish to avoid stirring up racial hatred between the English and Dutch inhabitants of South Africa. Finally, being anxious to kill the rebellion at one blow by a successful action, and thereby to secure the safety of the beleaguered garrisons in the Transvaal, he decided to advance as soon as possible against the Boers with what force he possessed. He set out therefore from Maritzburg on January 10th, 1881, and proceeded to Newcastle, whither the troops had preceded him. Eighteen days later he had made the attack on Laing's Nek and had been repulsed.

The position of Laing's Nek is on a saddle, on a salient spur of the Drakensberg mountains, a few miles within the northern border of Natal; and the occupation of this position by the Boers was therefore an act of invasion. The position is a strong one from the Natal side, the ascent to the Nek being steep, while the ridges on either side of the road of 1881 curved forward and somewhat enveloped it. The position was secured from attack on the west side by the Drakensberg mountains, and on the east by the Buffalo river, both absolute obstacles to turning movements so far as a small force was concerned.

Having then decided to attack the Boer invaders with what means he possessed, and without colonial aid, the General moved out of Mount Prospect Camp, situated on a high ridge about a mile to the right of the road from Newcastle to Laing's

Nek, on the morning of January 28th, 1881, at the head of about twelve hundred men of all arms; consisting of eight hundred and seventy infantry, one hundred and eighty mounted men, six guns and three rocket tubes. Two Gatlings and about two hundred men were left to guard the camp and stores.

The force, small as it was, had been so to speak scraped together from all parts of the Colony, and was, in the General's own words, as queer a mixture as was ever brought together. The mounted men consisted of some details of the King's Dragoon Guards, Army Service Corps men, and volunteers from two infantry battalions. They were indifferently mounted and mostly unskilled horsemen.

The "little mouthful of men" moved across the grassy ridges between Mount Prospect and Laing's Nek under cover of its guns, until it reached a point at the foot of, and about two thousand yards distant from the Boer position, where it formed up for attack. The enemy's right and centre being practically unassailable, Colley promptly decided to attack a spur on their left, much of which was dead ground, that is, ground sheltered from the fire of the defenders. Against a ridge on the right rear of the attack, from which a flanking fire would be sustained, the General adopted the hazardous expedient of launching his mounted men.

Disaster soon befell the English troops. Gallantly led by Major Brownlow, one of the handsomest and bravest of soldiers, the leading troop of the little squadron boldly charged up the steep ridge in the teeth of the Boer fire. The horses of Brownlow and his subaltern were killed on reaching the crest, and his sergeant-major and a corporal, who

also charged home among the enemy, were both killed. The Boers had received the order to retire and were running to their horses when the supporting English troop, that composed of the partially-trained mounted infantry, seeing, as they thought, all their leaders down, turned and galloped down the hill. The Boers immediately rallied and pelted the whole squadron with fire, driving them back. This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. Brownlow's charge, which was intended to have been simultaneous with that of the infantry, had been made somewhat too soon, but it was now too late to stop the assault. The 58th Regiment, its officers in front, was conducted to the point of assault by Colonel Deane, Sir George Colley's chief staff-officer. Riding before the regiment, and accompanied by three other staff-officers, Colonel Deane impetuously hurried the unfortunate 58th up the steep slope (so steep as almost to require climbing on hands and knees) bringing them under the Boer fire "in a confused mass and quite beat and breathless." Deane made a gallant and desperate attempt to charge, and fell riddled with bullets as he reached the brow, where his body, with those of Major Poole and Lieutenants Elwes and Inman were found ten yards ahead of any others. The men of the 58th gallantly struggled up after them, but no more could be done and they were quickly compelled to retire, leaving on the fatal ridge seven officers and seventy-six men killed, and two officers and one hundred and ten men wounded. Their retreat was covered by two companies of the 60th Rifles, who had been held in reserve, and behind them the 58th rallied with great steadiness, and continued the retirement in perfect order.

The lessons of the repulse at Laing's



Nek are very obvious, yet there can be no harm in noticing them. So much in war depends on first impressions that it is evident that a commander should launch his troops to their first attack with the utmost care. It does not appear that the tactical errors made at Laing's Nek were attributable to Sir George Colley. That he was justified in attacking a strong position, openly and without any attempt at surprise, with a force numerically weaker than the defenders, is very doubtful. That matter, however, was one of which he, knowing all the circumstances, was the best judge, and it would be presumptuous to say that the attack, made, as it was, by trained soldiers on a body of undisciplined farmers, was foredoomed to failure. Certainly few, if any, of Colley's force had realised the courage and tenacity with which the Boers would fight, and brave and tenacious though they proved themselves many hold that their success on this occasion was won by a very narrow margin, and that had care been taken to ensure the punctual co-operation of our two attacks, all might have gone well. The lessons then of Laing's Nek are as follows :— (1) When simultaneous attacks have been arranged, perfect punctuality on the part of the various portions must be achieved. This punctuality requires the utmost care. (2) All troops should be led to the assault by their own officers. The assumption of this duty by staff-officers is most improper, and has frequently led to disaster. (3) Infantry, which has approached a position over difficult ground, should on no account be called upon to charge before the men have recovered their breath; and no charge should be attempted before the defenders have been shaken by a previous heavy fire. This is, of course, a well-known principle, yet many failures

in attack have been caused by its neglect.

The conduct of the defeated general after the repulse at Laing's Nek was truly admirable. In all his letters, public and private, as in his recorded utterances, Sir George Colley frankly and freely took all blame to himself, blame that in many instances was not his due. His one hope and desire was that the Boers would take heart of grace and attack his small and isolated force at Mount Prospect Camp, and afford him a fair chance of retrieving his position. Elated though they doubtless were by their unexpected victory the Boers had no taste for an enterprise of this nature, yet they soon showed their military instinct by movements directed against Colley's line of communications.

Before describing the action of Ingogo, brought about by an attempt of Sir George to rectify this difficulty, a few words may be said regarding the force which he (after Laing's Nek) considered sufficient to subdue the Transvaal and, if necessary, the Orange Free State.

In a letter to Sir Evelyn Wood, who, though his senior, had volunteered to serve under his command, Sir George Colley wrote the following scheme.

He, with two thousand two hundred infantry, four hundred and fifty cavalry, and eight guns was to capture Laing's Nek. Wood, with a second column was to march from Newcastle to Utrecht towards Wakkerstrom, and thence threaten the Boers at Laing's Nek in rear, thereby facilitating Colley's movement. Wood was then to relieve Leydenberg and settle the Swazi border and the Wakkerstrom and Utrecht districts, while Colley pushed on to Pretoria to resume the government. Should the Orange Free State prove hostile, Colley considered that Sir Evelyn would be equal

to disposing of it with three battalions, a strong cavalry regiment, and eight guns. This is all interesting matter now; but four days after this letter came the fight at Ingogo.

On February 7th, ten days after the assault on Laing's Nek, the post, carried by mounted natives, was attacked on its way to Newcastle, and the arrival of a convoy which was expected at Mount Prospect seemed likely to be prevented. At eight o'clock, therefore, on the following morning, the General marched out of camp with thirty-eight mounted men, four guns, and about two hundred and eighty infantry. He intended to escort the mail beyond the point of danger, and then to return to camp with the expected convoy.

At about seven miles from camp the Ingogo river was crossed without any sign of opposition, and two guns and a half-company of infantry were dropped to secure the passage. From this point the road could be seen for more than a mile, leading up to a triangular plateau, having a fairly level top some four acres in extent. The English column here found its further progress barred by a strong skirmishing line of Boers in a semi-circular formation, and was compelled hurriedly to take up a defensive position round the crest of the little plateau. This ground it held from about noon till night-fall, the greater part of the time under a very heavy and well-aimed fire. The small artillery detachment suffered especially heavily, its commanding and subaltern officers, and nearly all its rank and file being killed or wounded. The artillery-subaltern, who highly distinguished himself, was Lieutenant C. S. B. Parsons, now Colonel Sir Charles Parsons, K.C.M.G.

In the action of the Ingogo the superiority of the Boer marksman-

ship was strikingly shown. Nothing but the most dogged courage enabled Colley's small force to hold its ground. Two-fifths of the entire force, and three-quarters of the horses were killed or wounded, yet so bold was the front shown that all the efforts of the Boer commander failed to induce his men to drive their attack home. The numbers of the attacking force were increased during the day to at least eight hundred men, but after night-fall, in pitch darkness and heavy rain, Sir George extricated the survivors of his little force from their perilous position, and safely conducted them over the eight miles of rough ground that lay between Mount Prospect and the plateau that was the final resting-place of so many of their comrades.

The lessons of the action of the Ingogo are especially valuable, for in addition to the lurid light thrown on the supreme importance of good shooting to the infantry soldier, the Boers on this occasion gave, by their natural military instinct, a lesson for all time as to the manner in which infantry should attack artillery. The incident, which occurred at the beginning of the action, is thus related by Sir William Butler.

A thousand yards distant on the right a strong body of mounted men were standing close enough together to offer an easy target to artillery. Between this body, which numbered about one hundred, and our position the ground descended into a *donga*, rising again to the opposite ridge on which the Boers stood. It was a chance for artillery not to be lost; the gun swung quickly round, unlimbered, and came into action.

There was a momentary hesitation on the part of the Boers, and well there might be. Here was the arm whose prowess they had most reason to fear. Would they turn and gallop back to seek shelter behind the ridge on which they stood, or go forward and get within rifle-distance of the nine pounders? There was little time given to chose.

The first shell burst high and beyond them, as at full gallop the band descended the hill, gained the lower *donga*, and, dismounting, began at once to push up the little valleys leading to the plateau, where from the cover of every rock and grass-patch they opened a rapid and most accurate fire on the guns . . . . get within rifle-range, and their straight shooting would do the rest.

What the Boers did at the Ingogo English marksmen can do wherever they meet artillery.

The gravity of the task before Sir George Colley was now evident to him. Only a fortnight had elapsed since he had left Newcastle: the Boer invaders were more firmly established than ever at Laing's Nek; and a third of his force had been killed or wounded. The burden of his misfortunes was heavy to bear, and heavier yet the load of responsibility for the future.

That he was unfortunate at Laing's Nek we may willingly admit; that his attempt to re-open his communications at Ingogo with so small a force was a tactical error can hardly be denied; and there will be few to defend his third throw for fortune, the seizure of Majuba. Yet there is much to admire, much to love, in the character of the unsuccessful general as drawn by his biographer and friend, "fixed in purpose, unshaken in resolve, bearing upon his shoulders many loads, and striving manfully for the honour of his country and the reputation of her soldiers."

The hill of Majuba, a name of bitter memory for England, dominated the western extremity of the Boer position at Laing's Nek, but was not held by them. They had contented themselves with posting a piquet of observation daily upon the hill, while concentrating their energies on strengthening the defences of the pass itself. They believed, in fact, that by holding the pass they could

bar the road into the Transvaal, while Colley persuaded himself, or was persuaded, into the belief that, by seizing Majuba, he could vitiate the whole Boer line of defence and compel them to abandon Laing's Nek.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and it now seems clear enough that had it been possible to drag, or carry, even one gun to the summit of Majuba, and had the seizure of the hill been immediately followed by an advance of the troops at Newcastle (now increased by reinforcements to a regiment of cavalry, a battery of artillery, two battalions of infantry, and other details) to a renewed attack from below, Majuba might have been a victory instead of a defeat. What actually happened must now be told.

On the evening of February 26th Colley marched silently from Mount Prospect with a small and, unhappily, mixed force numbering five hundred and fifty-four of all ranks. These consisted of seven companies, belonging to the 58th Regiment, 60th Rifles, and 92nd Highlanders, with sixty-four sailors. Three of the companies, namely the two of the 60th Rifles and one of the 92nd, were posted at important points between the camp and Majuba, so that but four companies and the sailors, numbering under four hundred men, finally occupied the summit. With this little force the crest of the plateau of Majuba was to be held, a perimeter of some twelve hundred yards; but so commanding in appearance was the position that no shadow of doubt as to their ability to hold it against all comers seems to have crossed the minds of any of the defenders. To this fatal confidence, and the consequent failure to entrench the position, the disaster which now befell our arms must be attributed.

The effect on the minds of the Boers of the discovery that Majuba

was occupied by our troops has been variously described. Some writers assert that a panic ensued, and that the majority of the garrison of Laing's Nek prepared to beat a hurried retreat. Others again assert that the Boers were so far from being alarmed that they at first thought that the Highlanders who showed on the crest line were a mere patrol, and they in consequence sent but a small number of men to drive the intruders away.

Be this as it may, the Boer attack on Majuba Hill on that Sunday morning eighteen years ago was a most gallant feat of arms, and the performance of the assaulting party may be looked on as a model of conduct in hill-warfare. The actual assault on our position was carried out by the men who had fought in the two previous actions, while covering parties engaged the attention of the defenders with long-range fire from three directions. At the same time patrols were sent by the Boers to ascertain if any move against them was threatened from Newcastle. Veteran soldiers could have taken no better precautions.

To describe the disaster in detail would be too distasteful a task. Suffice it to say that steady firing opened on our men at about seven in the morning. At about eleven no great harm had been done; the Boers appeared to be wasting their ammunition, and no doubt as to the event was entertained. Suddenly, at about half-past one, about sixty Boers appeared close to a body of our men, occupying a small stony knoll, and fired a volley which killed, disabled, or dispersed them in a moment.

The sudden collapse of this party

so dumb-founded those who were in sight of the spot that they recoiled from the brow of the hill, thus leaving the attacking force free access to the summit. The Boers promptly availed themselves of this unexpected piece of good fortune, and rapidly mounting the crest poured so heavy and well-directed a fire into the defenders that an irremediable panic set in,—and the day was lost. All the efforts of the unhappy Colley and his officers to rally their men were in vain; and then, at last, having suffered all the bitterness that life has in store for a soldier, Colley had the supreme good fortune to find death.

In the grave, that temple of reconciliation, no self-reproaches, no vain regrets trouble his soul. His countrymen, knowing that he laid down his life for England, will not dwell too curiously on the causes of his defeat. Yet the lessons of Majuba should not be forgotten. Never again should over-confidence tempt us to neglect precautions of universal application from a false sense of security. If this lesson, so often ignored by Englishmen, be now thoroughly learned, even the humiliation of Majuba may have its uses.

And England may surely lay a lesson to heart from the great national humiliation of 1881. Never again, let us pray, will an English statesman cry peace when there is no peace, and with an enemy occupying English soil bid our soldiers stay their hand. We are to-day reaping the bitter crop sown by Gladstone in 1881.

HUGH PEARSE, Major,  
*East Surrey Regiment.*